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THE RETURN OF JENNY WEAVER

BY

MARGARET TURNBULL

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To

SARAH LASKY

THE RETURN OF JENNY WEAVER

CHAPTER I

NEVER anything more beautiful than the woods at the edge of the Drake estate near Lost Harbor, Maine, that June morning. The clean green of the trees, the narrow sandy road, the glimpses of blue sky and bluer water that could be seen straight down the narrow road, or between the rows of birch and pine, were wonderful. Here and there, where the growth was less dense, one could catch, through the trees, an occasional glimpse of the main road.

Rodney Barber and Benny Henty, his helper, were too busy to bother about sky or sea, or roads for that matter. It was their job to get in the wood that had lain there seasoning since last December, when they had cut it, before the heavy snows stopped all wood-cutting.

Under Rod's agreement with Mrs. Drake half of the wood was to be cut and stacked for her use; the other half was his to sell or keep. He could sell it to advantage now that the summer cottages were opening, and so had secured Benny and the truck. The wood, cut in proper lengths, would soon be burning in open fire-places, for Maine nights are cool, even in summer.

The men had come down the little used wood road from the main road not more than three hundred yards away. They could not bring the truck any nearer the logs, where Rod was standing, so he sorted them over

preparatory to throwing some to Benny, who placed them, one by one, on the truck.

Benny lit his pipe and glanced through the trees toward the main road. He thought first that this time in the morning there was very little travelling, and then wondered if Mrs. Drake was at the house yet. He must ask Rod. Rod had told him that he had orders from Mrs. Drake to bring the wood in, but he had not said whether she was here, or whether young Tony was down alone again. Benny leaned against the truck and puffed at his pipe, having carefully put the dead match in his pocket. Ten to one when Rod smelled tobacco he would get cranky and make him put out his pipe, but he could get in a little smoke first.

"Judas!"

It was Rod's voice, but so peculiar in pitch and tone that Benny jumped.

"Snakes?"

"No. Worse. Judas! Come here, Ben!"

Benny Henty had never been quick in either thought or action. He had the Maine drawl, and a leisurely walk that rather exaggerated the native deliberation, but it took only a few strides to reach Rod.

He was standing a little away from the road, just where the pile of logs had lain since they were cut. He had parted the boughs of a pine tree, a small tree but the largest in that little thicket of half-grown pines and birches, which screened the logs from the wood road on which the truck was waiting. It was partially screened, also, from the main road, yet it was so near the latter that, as Benny reached the spot, he was aware of a car going by, and had time to think that Bob Nuttal had ought to put a little grease on his springs less'n he wanted to let everybody within a mile know when he was coming.

Rod had not moved. He was still holding back the

pine boughs and looking intently down at the ground when Ben joined him.

"What the—" Ben began and stopped. He took another step and stared.

After a moment Ben spoke: "Buttons! That's what they are! Them little spots!"

"Yeah," Rod answered him, "and them's leg and arm bones. Don't touch them! This is a case for the law, Ben."

Ben looked up at him puzzled. "Skeleton, ain't it? But what's wrong with it? What makes it look so funny?"

"Judas! Don't you see? It has no head." Rod let the pine boughs swing back, raised his own head and stretched himself as though throwing off a burden. "By God! It's given me the shivers. I'm glad I wan't here alone."

"Makes a fellow crawly," agreed Ben. "Yet I don't know why. A skeleton's clean to what we might have found earlier. But where's the head?"

Rod shook his head and began to look about him. "Don't see no trace of it, but we'd better look. They'll kinda need the head to settle the question."

"What question?"

"Why—" Rod pointed at the bones and rags of clothing under the tree, "who was it—she?"

"How do you know it's a her?"

"Well, I ain't any scientific doctor to tell by the bones," Rod answered impatiently, "but, at least, I can see that when them rags were clothes they were female clothes."

"That's right."

Rod looked down at the bones and the rags of what had been clothes. "Them's silver buttons," he said slowly, "tarnished. The big one lying on that big bone is a kinda brooch and musta fastened the neck of her

dress. The six little fellers were on her sleeves, I guess. The body," he said, after a pause, "was sure laid flat on its back. Flat and straight she was laid and there's nothing about the way them bones are placed now to suggest any struggling. Them arms is extended like. They're only about four or five inches from the body. Dead before she was laid there, I'll take my oath."

"I feel queer," said Ben suddenly. "Let's step out into the road and get a clean breath and see what's best to be done."

Rod followed him without comment until they stood in the road and then he admitted: "Does give you a kinda queer feeling. I dun't mind telling you, Ben, I feel kinda sad, looking at it. That's what all of us come to. Pitiful, ain't it?"

"Yeah," Ben acknowledged. "Must have been some time there, eh?"

"Sure must. Well, Ben, according to law we ought not to touch it until the proper officer, the coroner, I guess, gets here and we'd better git him as quick as may be."

"How you goin' to arrange that?"

"Well, I cal'late the best way to arrange would be for you to go down to Tom Burke's and telephone."

"Right you are. I'll take the truck. What'll you do?"

"Why, I cal'late to stay here," answered Rod, "and go on tossing them logs out to the wood road."

Ben looked at him thoughtfully. "Wouldn't rather come along with me, Rod? Dun't that kind of thing—" He motioned toward the heap under the pine tree—"make you feel creepy-crawly?"

"Nope." Rod shook his head. "It makes me feel mournful, but I ain't afraid of being left alone with any poor passel of bones and rags that used to be a woman."

"That used to be a woman," echoed Ben as he

started the truck. "Well, by Godfreys! I'd like to know *what* woman!"

Rodney Barber opened his mouth to speak, changed his mind and closed his mouth. After a second he called: "Linger no longer than you have to, Ben. These logs have got to get down to Drake's before to-night. We can't afford to lose too much time. Better telephone Drake's house too, and let whomsoever's there know what's been found on their grounds."

Ben nodded and went away, bumping and swaying, down to the junction of the wood road with the main or Harbor Road.

Rod went toward the pile of logs, stopped at the tree, and once more bent over, examining the pitiful remains of what had been a human being.

There were many strangers who came to Lost Harbor in the summer-time. Yet he could not recall hearing of any missing woman among them. There were many motorists who went along the Harbor Road nowadays, yet he did not remember hearing of an accident just here, and there were no indications that a car had been wrecked nearby. Neither did it look to him as though this was the victim of some "hit and run" driver. The calm and peaceful way in which the bones rested did not suggest either agony or a struggle, but—where was the head?

He sighed and turned from the skeleton to his pile of logs, scarcely three feet away. How near they had been to discovery last winter when they cut the logs! Why hadn't they seen something? Then he remembered how deep the snow had been when they were cutting. They had had to dig it away from the trees before they could cut.

He flung a log toward the road. The echo of its fall startled the woods, and Rodney. That biggest button. It was more like a brooch than a button. Why did he

think he had seen it before? It looked as though it might open up like a locket. He went back and stooped to pick it up and try if it opened, but stopped himself. Maybe he'd best not. The coroner might want to see things just as they were. He crossed the road and sat down on one of the logs that he had pitched out near the truck and contemplated the spot where the skeleton lay. He glanced through the woods toward the main road, and saw a motor coming along. He knew it could not be the coroner and his assistant yet, but, at least, these were neighbours, alive and not a handful of bones. He glanced once more toward the skeleton, screened by the pine boughs.

"Might as well have some witnesses," he muttered to himself and called aloud, waving his arms, as he walked nearer to the little strip of woodland that separated him from the main or Harbor Road. The car on Harbor Road stopped and, as Rod called again, three men got out of it and ran toward the by or wood road, known as Sandy Road.

"What's wrong, Rod?" the foremost called breathlessly. "Hurt yourself or anything wrong with Ben?"

Rod shook his head.

"Truck busted?" the second in line asked.

"No, Ben's off in the truck to fetch the coroner."

"Who's dead?"

"Whoever it is has been a long time dead. Go take a look yourself."

The three men exchanged glances and then followed Rod in silence to the spot where the bones lay. Rod brushed aside the low hanging boughs of the pine tree. The three men bent forward. There was no sound for a moment as the living gazed on the dead. Then one of the men lifted his head.

"Whut is it?"

"Dun't you see the bones?"

"Sure, I see bones, but whut kind of bones are they? Might be hog's bones."

"Might not," said the second man. "What in time makes you so foolish, Harvey Oram? Trying to keep scandal out of your county, I suppose."

"Well, 'tis some puzzle, what they are," said the third man. "It ain't complete. Harvey's got a right to speculate about it before anything's said positive. It looks mighty queer to me."

"'Tain't complete," repeated the second man. "Sure as my name's Bill Toms, there's something missing."

"Queer," said the third man, Abijah Horn, leaning over and looking at it again. "Little heap of nothin' at all, ain't it, until you give it a second glance? Beats me how long it must have been weatherin'. Two, three years, mebbe! And as clos't to the Harbor Road as this! Well, what is it that makes it look so queer?"

"Judas!" Rod exclaimed with a degree of impatience unusual to him, and which spoke of slightly frayed nerves. "Can't you see it lacks the head? Scatter and look for it!"

Obediently the three men began to circle about the little wood in which the body lay, like hounds on the track.

Rod breathed a sigh of relief. It would keep them from speculating out loud. He did not want anything much said before the coroner arrived.

Even as he thought this Abijah Horn trumpeted out in his harsh voice: "Say, them was bits of dress goods, wan't they? It's a woman's head we're looking for, ain't it?"

The other men stopped their search and stood up, looking at each other.

"A woman!" Harvey Oram echoed. "Whut woman?"

"That," said Rod quickly, looking at the others, "is for the coroner to determine."

"P'rhaps," said Bill Toms, "but I should say by your looks, Rod, that you'd had some kind of speculate as to who it were."

Rod shook his head.

"The head now," Harvey Oram began, "suppose some wild animal chawed it off. He'd left it somewhere around."

"Might have," Abijah admitted. "Come to think of it, who's been lost or kinda departed around here lately?"

"Great Judas!" Rod burst out furiously. "Get to work and dun't talk until the coroner comes."

"Seems to me it would be a good idea if this here discovery that was made on the Drake's property was sort of looked over by young Drake or someone before the rest of the town gets here," Oram declared.

Rod faced him quickly. "What makes you say that?"

Oram, unsmiling, answered him. "When a passel of bones is found on the Drake land, the Drakes ought to know it."

There was something ominous in the glance that passed between the men before Rod spoke: "Benny's telephoning the house, but I'm going down for him, myself, because I want to be sure, if there's any gossip started, that he'll be there to hear it."

The men looked at Rod sharply, and Abijah Horn walked quickly forward and came between Rod and Oram, as though to separate them, then shuddered violently as he found himself almost upon the bones. He seized Rod by the arm:

"God Almighty! Rod, it isn't any one we know—or —or knew, is it?"

"I ain't saying—yet," Rod told him stubbornly. "But, whoever she was, it's gonna be a pesky stinking mess when all's known, and there'll be people, far and near, that'll wish we'd never uncovered them bones, to let them skeleton hands pull them into it."

CHAPTER II

SUDDENLY and mysteriously, there ran through Lost Harbor, like a sinister thread of scarlet in a fabric that was meant to be entirely black, the tale that the poor decayed rags of clothing, in which the body had been wrapped, had been identified, and that the identification carried with it the woman's name.

No trace of the head had been found in the thin little patch of woods in which the body had been lying, nor in all the great expanse of fir and birch that formed a part of the Drake estate. Nothing, not even a single bone that could, by any stretch of the imagination, be said to belong to the missing head, had resulted from a most painstaking search. Here was mystery of the ugliest sort.

The coroner and his aids had declared the bones to be those of a woman, between twenty-five and thirty years of age; that her head had not been taken from her body after death by some animal, but had probably been hacked from the body, by an unknown hand, with a sharp, strong instrument, probably a knife.

Lost Harbor, outwardly calm and unconcerned to its " summer visitors," continued to seethe with gossip and excitement, all through the early summer, as every now and then some citizen would disappear and be seen entering, or leaving, the county attorney's office in the nearby county seat. When these townspeople came back, whether they had gone willingly or unwillingly, they had evidently been instructed to hold their tongues, which is an extremely difficult thing to

do in the country, where news is hard to get and much appreciated. No one could be quite certain who first whispered the name, yet presently it was being openly said that those bones were all that were left of silly, pretty, laughing Jenny Weaver.

The Codey family, from which Jenny came, was old in sin and sunk in iniquity, and yet, from out of that tangle of illegitimacy, drinking, poverty, and feeble-mindedness, which constituted the Codey inheritance, a certain beauty of feature and body, bequeathed by some far away ancestor, still persisted among its numerous female members. Jenny Weaver had been almost beautiful. The clear colour, the straight and delicate features, that came from some far off Maine man or woman who had married or mated with a Codey, were hers, with the jet black hair and great black eyes that a nearer forebear, "Pete the Port-chugee," had handed down.

Jenny was lovely, but Jenny's morals were frail and Jenny's manners, though gentle enough, could not quite cover her many sins of omission. She had been known in Lost Harbor as "pretty easy-going," before she married Blaine Weaver.

Blaine, himself, had always been the most easy-going of mortals, but Blaine believed thoroughly in the double standard. For himself, all the license and liberty in the world, for "his woman," none at all. Jenny resented Blaine's attitude. It became a common thing, for those who happened to pass Blaine Weaver's ugly, tumble-down house near the edge of the town, to hear sounds of strife, and often to see the actual warfare.

The Codeys were foolish rather than vicious and they had, to a certain degree, at least, the virtue of family affection; but none of them were fond of Blaine Weaver. He had not been as open-handed in his wooing as Jenny's other followers. Candy and forbidden

liquor had not been placed upon the table with the invitation: "Sit in, Maw, and take what becomes you to take."

It is true Jenny had been really married to Blaine, which, considering one or two episodes of Jenny's youth, was held to be a lucky thing for Jenny; but the obstinate fact remained that she had tied herself to a man who was both drunken and jealous.

Jenny had, beside beauty, certain accomplishments which the other Codeys lacked. Summer visitors, attracted by Jenny's pretty face, had tried to put her in the way of earning an honest living, and Jenny had been trained to cook, wait, wash and clean. She kept herself tidy, and Blaine's house much more shipshape than its dilapidated outside would have led anyone to believe.

Blaine's father and mother were on a slightly higher social plane than Jenny's parents. They had a farm. His parents and sister gossiped about Jenny, and sided with him in all the quarrels. Jenny, though amiable, had little patience and more than once had run screaming home to her mother, only to be taken back later by a sober and slightly penitent Blaine.

But presently even these short interludes of peace ceased, and Jenny, partly because she had to get away from Blaine, and partly because she wanted the clothes that Blaine's rather intermittent earnings could not supply, took service in Lost Harbor again. She drifted from one place to another, always welcomed because of her neat ways and pleasant manners, but finally dismissed because of Blaine's visits, which were too noisy to be ignored, and too frequent for any householder to put up with. Sometimes Blaine, who had a "team," consisting of one old white horse, would work, and having worked for awhile would come to Jenny laden with gifts and promises, and once more their

highly irregular housekeeping would be taken up, to be interrupted soon by another of Jenny's flights.

She had been at Drake House for her longest period of service in any private dwelling, but shortly before her disappearance she had left that refuge behind her.

Young Tony Drake was known to have interceded for Jenny. He had gone to public school for awhile at Lost Harbor and, though he had been a child there when Jenny was in her 'teens, was concerned about his old schoolmate. It was Alonzo True, the butler, who finally shut that door on Jenny.

She had gone to Harbor Hall as a waitress. This was a summer hotel, or boarding house, for the art students who flocked to Lost Harbor every summer. It was from Harbor Hall she had disappeared one July night.

It is curious but, if death removes a citizen from his or her accustomed place in the community, the grass in the cemetery is scarcely green over the new made grave before life is taking its accustomed way. There is little to show in the chain of everyday events that one is gone who has been useful, ornamental, or apparently necessary to the routine of daily community life. The name is avoided, lest the naming give pain, and as there is no speculation as to the citizen's whereabouts, there is no curiosity. As much as can be known is known. Such a one has been, is gone, and the place will know him no more.

When a man or woman leaves the community by rail, by motor, by plane, by wagon or water, or in a motor van with all his wordly possessions, in open sight of his fellows, there is both speculation and curiosity. So-and-so's name, when mentioned, may start a discussion of his past performances, and his future; or it may be that some intelligence, as to where he has gone or what he is doing, may drift back to the home town.

THE RETURN OF JENNY WEAVER

This citizen is not dead, but living, and any moment may prove it by a return.

But when a citizen moves without explanation? In the morning here, as part of the community, in the evening gone—where? There is no end to the richness of the possibilities as to why he, or she, left and where they now are.

This had been Jenny Weaver's case. Suddenly Jenny had gone. She was not at her mother's home. Inquiry at her husband's home brought out the fact that he had taken her to the door of Harbor Hall, and left her there, about ten o'clock that night. He knew nothing more, but hinted that she had threatened to go away with an actor belonging to a cheap vaudeville "team," which had been playing at Lost Harbor Opera House for three nights.

The manager of Harbor Hall was a busy woman with twenty-five hungry art students to feed. She railed against Jenny's desertion and hoped vainly for her return, but she and others finally accepted the fact that Jenny Weaver had made another and a longer flight from Blaine Weaver, and did not blame her.

Now they whispered that, after three years, Jenny Weaver had come back, mute and headless, a few rags of clothing, some tarnished buttons, and bones. The tongues of her fellow citizens made her name a living thing and, even as Rod had visioned, her skeleton hands reached out to grasp, and drag into the unsavoury mystery of her violent death, those who, while she lived, had never even publicly acknowledged an acquaintance with pretty Jenny.

The skeleton fingers clutched at Jane Stover, as she sat at the table where she wrapped her wares in brilliant orange paper, and tied them with black and orange tape.

There were no customers in the gift shop for it was

early. Jane should have been dusting and arranging the place for the day. It was a delightful old shanty, once a fish house, on a rickety wooden bridge which connected the harbor with the straggling hilly road where the summer visitors had their cottages and studios. The pretty, grey-eyed, black-haired shop-keeper had done well this summer, for herself and for her "poor boys," as Jane called the disabled men who made most of the gifts and toys she sold. Jane had worked for awhile in a Boston hospital at occupational therapy, until her mother's health had made it necessary to come back to Lost Harbor and open this antique, gift and toy shop. The shop not only kept Jane and her mother, but helped the men whom Jane had taught to earn a little money. Jane had been proud of it, but this morning the shop was hateful to her. She felt that she could not open it to face Lost Harbor people, or the "visitors" who thronged the town. They were all whispering about Tony Drake.

The bony fingers reached toward fashionable Harbor Hill. They tugged at the smart sport skirt of Juliet Jackson as she sat at the window in her room above Marian Whately's studio and wondered, for the hundredth time since she had arrived last night, what she was going to do about her small son, Julian.

Julian, at once Juliet's greatest pride and trouble, had developed a cough last fall. He had grown pale and thin. Juliet had been ordered to send him to a warmer climate and Marian Whately had offered to take him to California, and keep him all the winter on her uncle's ranch. It had been a godsend for Julian, and Juliet had accepted it eagerly and thankfully since her work held her in New York. But in the spring when Marian had brought Julian to New York to see his mother, on their way to Marian's cottage here, it was all too obvious that she had become Julian's slave and,

though she did not suspect it herself, that she was bitterly jealous of Julian's mother.

Juliet sighed. It was a wise head that was screwed on those small shoulders, and a clever brain that worked under that curly mop of short, red hair. Though she was tiny and looked like a mere girl, Juliet was a widow and one of the cleverest newspaper women of her time. She had a flair for criminal problems and psychology, invaluable to her paper. She had solved many problems for the police and the public, and was known, in certain circles, as "The Female Ferret."

Her marriage to Julian's father had been made against the wishes of her family and the wealthy aunt who had adopted her. High-spirited, and full of the joy of living, Juliet had gaily bade her old, luxurious life good-bye, to venture matrimony with Esmond Jackson, certain there was nothing that talented young man could not do. She had laughed at the threat that if she married him there would be no money for her, and they would have to live on Esmond's earnings. It had seemed ridiculous, until the death of her aunt proved that it had not been merely a threat. All the money that had been considered Juliet's own, and that had been lavishly spent upon her as a girl, had been left to a distant and disagreeable cousin.

When that news came to Juliet she was trying to keep her husband from drinking up every cent of the salary she needed so sorely for the small Julian. Her married life had proved to her that while the fascinating Esmond could do anything he liked, there were few things he cared to do steadily. She had bent every energy to keep him from drink, and found it impossible. Then she had tried her best to make him keep his job. This, also, became an impossibility, so the indomitable Juliet copied his style and wrote his articles. The experience gained in this way was invaluable, for when Esmond

Jackson departed this life, his untimely end hastened by the fact that drink fought him harder than he could fight drink, Juliet had training enough to accept the chance offered her by Esmond's associates. Newspaper men are wonderful friends, and they did their best for Juliet. Knowing now that her place among them was secure, she continued to feel grateful, and to do all that she could to pay back her debt.

Marian Whately had been Esmond's friend since childhood, and though she had hated his drinking habits, she had adored Esmond. Juliet often thought that Esmond's headlong falling in love with her had been his worst mistake. It is safe to guess that if he had married Marian she would have denied that he drank, and concealed it as long as possible, and Marian had enough money to help her conceal many things.

Now that Esmond was gone, Marian's pent-up devotion had been transferred to Esmond's son, and Juliet, who pitied her, had honestly tried to share Julian with her, but in the short period since Julian's return, she doubted the wisdom of such an attempt. Julian had discovered that he could make Marian give him the things he wanted simply by screaming for them. Yet Marian wanted so to keep Julian near her that she was willing to make any sacrifice, and Juliet must be free to earn her living. For the boy's sake, Juliet hesitated.

Oh, misery! She thought to herself, as she turned from the window, this is much worse than having a rival in love. I can't have the boy use Marian in the way he does, and yet, Marian will hate me if I discipline him and, incidentally, her.

She heard a voice in the garden asking if Mrs. Jackson was in and would see him, and put her red head out of the window.

It was Bill Davis. He saw the curly head and called: "I must see you, Juliet. Come down."

"How did you know I was here?"

Then, before he could answer, she put her finger to her lips: "Never mind, I'll be down. Wait."

She turned from the window and snatched up her hat. Her first reaction had been that of distinct annoyance. She had not known that Bill was in Lost Harbor. He had agreed not to disturb her in the pursuit of her lawful occupation. His desire, that she leave all newspaper work to other reporters, all investigations to the police, marry him, adorn his beautiful home and spend his agreeably large income, was not shared by Juliet, though she liked Bill.

Juliet felt now, as she started down the stairs, that it was the irony of fate that Bill should come to-day when Julian, whom Bill considered his most "deadly" rival, occupied all her thoughts.

Bill's face was troubled as he waited for her in the tiny garden where the colours seemed to be more brilliant than in any inland place. He had been gazing critically at Commodore Blaney's handsome "cottage" next door. Bill, who was a successful architect, had designed the house himself, and was rather proud of it. He forgot his pride in his profession at the first glimpse of Juliet at the door.

He took her hands in his, and apparently forgot about them for he refused to let them go, and if any of the neighbours were looking, it made a far more sentimental picture than Juliet wished. The sight of her had caused Bill to forget everything but the desire to confide his troubles:

"I have come crawling on my hands and knees to beg you to help my young and distant relative, Tony Drake."

Juliet stared at him. "Your relative? Tony Drake!"

"Oh, very distant, I grant you," agreed Bill. "Only a third cousin, several times removed, but still, though I've seen very little of him, I like the boy."

Juliet hesitated. She saw that she was being drawn into the very thing she had always dodged. She did not want to have anything to do with a case in which Bill Davis, or any other friend, was personally interested. Then she glanced at Bill's set face.

"Unless a miracle occurs to change the view of the county attorney, he'll probably be arrested for the murder of Jenny Weaver, and he's awfully young and alone," Bill urged. "I know I've said all sorts of things against the work you do, Juliet, but I take them all back. I don't need to tell you that money won't pay for anything you do, but there's plenty of it. You're to make your own terms."

"Anything I'll do will be for you——"

"No, don't say that, Juliet," Bill interrupted. "This may be a long case. Get your paper interested. Tell them we want you, and will pay all expenses."

Juliet shook her head decidedly. "Understand this, Bill. First and last, whatever I do, is for the paper. Nothing doing with Drake's money or yours. The Drakes can pay for all sorts of things I'll suggest, but to me—nothing!"

"Juliet, be sensible!"

Juliet looked up at him impishly. "For love or nothing, Bill."

"For love, and—I wish you meant it the way I do."

"Forbidden. Come, I don't want Marian to drag us in for polite conversation just now. Let's walk to the village, while you tell me all you know. Of course, I've heard a lot of gossip."

Bill longed to tell Juliet just what it meant to him to see her again, but she had her "business" mask and

manner on so he plunged into his story, without any preliminaries.

"I'd like you to know that Tony Drake's had a hard time of it. His mother divorced his father for no reason at all, except that she was tired and wanted a change, so she married a cousin of Drake's, same surname, ten years younger than herself. Tony's father married again too, a woman much younger than himself or Mrs. Drake.

"The boy's an unlicked cub, but he's been left down here at Lost Harbor with nothing but servants, season after season. It isn't the fault of his father and mother that he's not some sort of a moron, or an out and out bad egg."

Juliet said nothing. She looked toward Jane's shop and, closing her eyes to the blinding glare of the sunlit harbor, thought very hard thoughts of the mother who had neglected Tony Drake.

"Mrs. Drake didn't want Tony, but she had been given his custody. The father openly said he wouldn't stand for any six-months-with-one, six-with-the-other business, either he had the boy, himself, or his mother had him, and that was that!

"So Milly Drake hired some sort of nurse or governess when the boy was small, and when he grew older he was dragged away from his schools, whenever Milly wanted to travel and thought he would be safer 'at home.' She had no time to bother about a small son who might or might not be lonely, and whose presence made her feel so much older than she cared to look.

"The second Drake whom Milly had married was so much younger that she became conscious of her age and began a frantic pursuit of 'rests' or 'treatments' that would restore to her beauty something of its former youthful glow."

Juliet, impatient for more recent details, glanced at

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Bill, saw he felt these things were important, so listened and nodded, saying: "Oh, yes," and "I see," at the proper intervals.

Bill felt that much might be accomplished for Tony, if Juliet understood his background before she met him. He went on to tell her that as Tony grew larger and rougher, and more out of hand when the butler tried to exercise the authority that was not his, Lost Harbor began to gossip about "that bad boy, Tony Drake," and the "old families" left him out of all their social plans when Milly was not there, with the exception of Jane Stover and her mother. The Stovers were well born, though poor, and to them Tony had always shown his best side. Bill's hints made Juliet feel that there was more than mere liking between Jane Stover and Tony Drake. Bill pointed out feelingly that Tony had had no chance and, as though answering Juliet's unspoken criticism, he added that, though Milly Drake had no use for the boy, she would not allow him to be taken in hand by those of her relatives who conceived the boy neglected. She did not want them to discover how really ignorant and forlorn the lad was. In fact, his schooling had been so intermittent, that it had been a miracle to Bill and others that Tony, several years behind boys of his own age, had finally finished preparatory school and passed his college entrance examinations. Bill hinted this was due to Jane Stover's influence.

It was true, Bill admitted, that when Jenny Weaver had been one of the Drake household, Tony liked her, had seemed to hang about her. They had Lost Harbor jokes and memories in common, though Jenny was years older. Tony had resented the fact that Jenny had what he called a "hard deal" in her marriage with Blaine Weaver, but Bill was sure there was nothing more than that, though he admitted it looked odd.

"Yes, but Bill, this isn't the murder."

"No, but it is Tony, and you've got to know Tony to know that he just couldn't do it. I admit," he added, with a look that implored Juliet to understand, "there is something the boy is holding back."

"You're quite right," Juliet said emphatically. "He has not told all he knows by any means."

Bill looked miserable. "Yet he's a truthful boy."

"He's had a bad training for truthfulness during his solitary summers with the servants," commented Juliet. "Very easy to lie to people who have no real authority over you, and ask too many questions. Did they have the same butler all the time?"

Bill shook his head. "Changed every year and sometimes oftener, until True came. Milly is temperamental."

Juliet clenched her hand. "My Heavens! If only there could be a jury of women to pass upon some of these careless mothers! They would suffer instead of their children."

"I wouldn't be so sure. Some of these same mothers would be on your jury."

"They would be most severe on their like."

They turned to walk across the bridge on which Jane's shop was built and Juliet said: "He hasn't been actually arrested yet?"

"Not yet. Suspicion rests on the husband too, you see, but I think the county attorney's bull-headed to get Tony as an accomplice, and it's merely a question of time."

"Nothing you have told me is sufficient for an arrest on a murder charge. Come, tell me what else there is."

"I'd rather you got it from Tony Drake."

"So I will, but I've just arrived. Came last night. What sent you post haste to me?"

"Well—" Bill hesitated. "Jane Stover wrote me

that it looked pretty serious, and that she thought if I came to Lost Harbor, now, I might help Tony."

"Yes?"

"I came yesterday, and Commodore Blaney mentioned you were expected at Miss Whately's, so I——"

"Bill, however damning the information is that you are holding back, I've got to have it."

"Well, Tony told me that he didn't want my help; that it was a dirty business, and he would not have any name, mine or Jane Stover's, mentioned in connection with it, or him."

"Why should Jane Stover's name be mentioned?"

"Whenever anyone mentions Tony Drake here, it follows that they mention Jane Stover."

"I see. Very right of young Tony to want to keep her out of gossip. Get on, Bill, you are taking a lot of my time."

"Sorry. It seems that in investigating Jenny's disappearance they've been interviewing everybody who saw Jenny Weaver after she left Harbor Hall, on the night of July seventh, 1927. The last night she was seen alive."

"Most important."

"Tony was with Jenny and her husband, and they say he quarrelled violently with the husband."

"Yes? Before or after the hour that the husband is said to have left her at Harbor Hall gate?"

"Tony says Jenny couldn't have gone with her husband to Harbor Hall at the time her husband says she did."

"No?"

"He says that the husband isn't telling the truth."

"What does Tony say to prove that Jenny didn't go back to Harbor Hall?"

"Nothing. He refuses to talk."

"Ah!" Juliet said no more until they reached Jane's shop door. "Mrs. Drake coming here?"

"No," Bill said. "She and Drake are cruising around somewhere in his yacht. They stop at Newport."

"I would tell them to get here just as soon as possible."

"Tony doesn't want them."

"Tony will have to swallow a great many things that he doesn't want, before he's much older. Take me in and introduce me to Miss Stover. I'll do what I can for Tony."

"Juliet! I'll never forget this——"

"Don't be too grateful, Bill. As a matter of fact, I've been assigned. I hounded my editor from the moment I heard of the case, because, you see, Julian's staying here with Marian. I can be with him, not only for my holiday, which began yesterday, but all through the trial!"

CHAPTER III

THE door of the old fish house was wide open. It was quaint and cleverly arranged, also it called itself a shop, not a shoppe. Juliet, favourably impressed by this, paused to look at a delightful little boat in the window, which she felt she must have for Julian. The keeper of the gift shop came toward them, and Bill introduced Juliet.

Jane Stover was delightful to look at. A true Maine beauty, with the "sea in her eyes." Slender, with deep-blue-grey eyes and dark hair.

After his brief introduction, Bill, with a quick look at Jane's sensitive face, muttered something about shopping to be done at the Harbor and that he'd call for Mrs. Jackson on his way back. Both the women smiled in acquiescence, and Bill went away wondering what they would make of each other. Jane was a lovely girl, but Juliet would find her a little clam, when it came to information about Tony.

Jane, having learned that Juliet was at Miss Whately's studio, instantly claimed Marian as a friend, and cordially invited Juliet to make the shop a daily resting place, "especially when you have Julian with you."

"You know my Julian?"

"Oh, everybody knows Julian, and everybody likes him."

"In that case," Juliet told the girl, smiling, "speaking as Julian's mother, I've come to you for light on Tony Drake."

Instantly, Jane's pretty mouth straightened to a

thin, determined line: "What makes you think I can give you light on Tony Drake?"

Juliet watched a faint flush spread over the pale face. "My short stay in Lost Harbor has taught me that everybody knows Tony Drake's 'crazy' about Jane Stover, though 'Jane wun't say "yes" yet because she thinks he'd ought to do somethin' for a livin'.'"

In spite of herself, Jane laughed. This incredible red-headed imp who said she was Julian's mother was a clever mimic but, in spite of all Bill Davis had said, not for a moment did Jane believe her to be a clever detective.

"I'm not," Juliet said, as though Jane had spoken her thoughts aloud and, as Jane looked at her, startled, Juliet continued: "I mean I'm not a detective. I am a newspaper woman, and Bill Davis' friend. I want to help Tony Drake, if I can, and I expect you to aid me."

"I can't," Jane answered softly, but the softness of the voice did not hide from Juliet the strength of will behind it.

"Tony won't let you." It was not a question, but a statement.

"Tony won't let me," Jane repeated, woodenly.

Juliet sighed and pointed out the boat she admired. Jane wrapped it up in the brilliant orange paper which she adopted as a method of advertising her wares, while Juliet silently studied her.

Lock-and-key face, in spite of its beauty, she thought to herself. Takes herself very seriously. That's because she's so young. She's judging Tony, even though she loves him. She's not sure that she should forgive him for getting mixed up in this Weaver scandal. Thinks her opinion counts too. Maybe she's right. Possibly it is those who are older who are wrong in thinking that individual prejudices and opinions are, after all, of very little account and what matters most

in this world is to be kind. To be discriminatingly kind, if possible, but to be kind. It may be that young over-emphasis is of greater use, that it works for needed change and reform swifter than kindly mature tolerance. Well, Jane must take a little of her own medicine, now.

Juliet pulled at the band of blue tied over her red curls, to keep them from blowing all around her head rampantly like vine tendrils. She smoothed down the blue knitted gown that became her so well, and which she had hoped would help Jane to like her, and spoke sternly to Jane, who was again busily and bitterly hating her and all Lost Harbor because they discussed Tony Drake.

"You should have left Tony Drake alone, if you didn't want the town to talk. Yes, Tony followed you about, but you know, and all Lost Harbor knows that he would never have dared to bother a girl like you, unless you wanted him. Don't protest. I know. I married the 'bad boy' of my own town."

There were tears in the big grey eyes now, as Jane said vehemently: "That's what Jenny Weaver said to me once—" She stopped abruptly.

"I shouldn't wonder," Juliet said smoothly, although she was astonished, "and she probably told you it would be a dangerous thing—for you and for Tony, didn't she?"

Jane nodded. "I don't know how you know—but yes. She did."

"She should know," began Juliet, but Jane interrupted. "Tony promised me he'd stay away from her—Jenny. They say now—he didn't. How am I to believe him—if——"

"Does it matter a continental how many promises a man breaks—if a woman really cares? Why don't you ask Tony Drake instead of taking town talk."

"I've told him I'll stick to him through everything, that I don't believe, and I don't, a word they say."

"Well?"

"All he says is that I'm not to talk to anybody and especially not to reporters. He won't have me dragged into this and, even to me, he refuses to talk about it."

Bill came back with a big parcel which Juliet feared contained some monstrous toy. He judged, from a glance at two very silent women, that he had best confine his speech to commonplaces. Presently Bill and Juliet took their way back over the shaky bridge and up the straggling, rocky road toward Marian's cottage which was modest compared with the others on the hill.

They walked past an old fish-salting establishment perched on the rocky harbor side, which was now a studio where a famous teacher of painting conducted his classes. Other signs half way down the hill pointed to a road leading inland, and Bill told Juliet that the "Sunset Hill," so indicated, sheltered, in the season, a heterogeneous mass of "culture," including painting, language schools, a dramatic school and an open-air theatre, which was soon to give its last performance for this season.

Juliet promised herself she would not miss that.

High above the fish-saltery, Marian's quaint grey shingled cottage and studio looked down upon them and down the middle of the road, dragging a cart full of pebbles came Juliet's pride and glory, the freckled, chubby Julian.

When she saw him, Juliet said suddenly to Bill: "Jane Stover refused to talk. Said Tony told her she must not, and gave her, she says, nothing to talk about."

Bill nodded. "I was afraid," he began, but had time to say no more for Julian halted, kissed his mother, and looked over the tall stranger.

"Hullo, Man! Was you wantin' to see me? I can't stop now, 'less it's mos' importan'."

"It is. It's a package for Julian Jackson, from his friend, Bill Davis."

"Let's see the pac'age."

It proved to be a large white rabbit, and Julian looked disappointed until he was shown that you unscrewed its head and found it full of chocolates.

"It's a quite nice beast," Julian admitted graciously, "but I have to ask Muvver or Aunty Marian before I can eat a single teeny chocolate."

"Quite right. I always had to ask too, when I was your age."

"Were you ever as little as I am?"

Bill nodded. "Doesn't seem possible, does it?"

Julian, shaking his head, surveyed Bill's six feet and more. "I suppose I'll grow too, some day. I don't know what Muvver and Aunty Marian will do then. I couldn't never get in their laps."

"They could get in yours," Bill suggested.

It was an idea that had never struck Julian. "They could, if I'd let them, but it isn't the same thing at all."

"No," admitted Bill, "it isn't, but look at me. Only an elephant would have a big enough lap to hold me."

This seemed to Julian the height of comedy. They both laughed very hard. Bill politely, but Julian heartily, slapping his new blouse the way he had seen Rod slap his shirt when he laughed with Nurse Mary.

"N'elephants don't have laps. They have trunks," he informed Bill.

They both laughed again.

"Tell me some more jokes," said Julian genially, and added: "If a chocolat' falls out of the rabbit's neck and I pick it up, don't you think I could eat it wivout askin', since no one would have gived it to me?"

"You might," said Bill, quickly, "but I wouldn't.

If we ask prettily we might be given at least two pieces, maybe three. And three clean chocolates beat one dirty one, don't they, Old Sock?"

Julian agreed, sighed and clung to the rabbit. "We could get there faster," he said, "if you were to carry me and the rabbit. I feel a little tired."

Bill picked him up. Julian settled back in the crook of Bill's arm, embracing the rabbit. "Pretty good. This is pretty good. Stay to lunch, won't you?" he added politely, and snuggled his head against Big Bill's shoulder. He instantly went to sleep. It had been a busy morning. But even in his sleep he did not relinquish his hold on Bunny Rabbit.

Juliet, who had been silently watching them, sighed. It was odd and disconcerting to see her small son in Bill's arms.

"He takes to me, you see, Juliet."

"Julian is a friendly little soul."

"He's more than that," insisted Big Bill, "he's a personage. I've always known he was my most serious rival, but never before have I understood how great his charm. I don't think I'll give him up," he added as Juliet held out her arms. "You've kept us apart long enough. I have an idea if I hold tight to Julian I may be allowed to stick around."

"Don't be silly," Juliet told him, smiling. "If I haven't made you see you're welcome, Bill, I apologize. Come in and lunch with Marian and with me, and tell me all you know before Julian wakes."

In the dining-room Marian Whately watched them closely, a bitter jealous feeling growing up within her. What was there about Juliet Jackson that made men crazy about her. She lacked, to Marian, so many of the womanly qualities that made up the perfect helpmate. Marian looked out on the world and her fellow women with her own curiously foreshortened vision,

and with this same outlook she credited all mankind. When she discovered that her vision did not correspond with what they really saw Marian was always thunderstruck, and put the discrepancy down to the unaccountable ways of men and the dreadful unevenness of Fate, or Providence, or whatever it was that directed, or misdirected, the affairs of women in this world.

There was very little that was truly modern about Marian, and naturally she suffered all the pains and disappointments of the unduly conservative in a world which is never old-fashioned but always new. She wondered now why Bill stood this teasing off-hand manner from a little redheaded whisp. That Bill should prefer to be so treated by just this woman, when he could be flattered and made much of by one more than twice her size, and with money and looks, was one of the things that Marian never would understand.

The shrewd redheaded whisp knew exactly, or as near as need be, what Marian thought about it all, and it merely made Juliet wish devoutly that Providence would give Marian either a seeing eye, or some man to make violent love to her.

Luncheon seemed, to Juliet, to take much longer than usual. She was anxious to get away with Bill to Drake House and see Tony Drake, but she felt she must not abruptly turn her guest away, since Marian fully approved of Bill Davis, socially and physically, and men were scarce in Lost Harbor.

When Marian finally went back to her easel in the garden, Juliet put on a hat, and looked about her for her son. His nap must have been over, long since, and if Nurse Mary had not taken him down on the rocks, she must see him to say good-bye. It was a ceremony Julian insisted upon, and endeavoured to make as heart-rending as possible so that binding promises might be extracted from the unwary adult.

She heard his imperious voice in the garden, and though she loved the ground his small feet trod on, Juliet frowned. He was coming up the path from the rocks, his chubby hand in that of Marian Whately, and was saying, determinedly:

"No, no, Marian. Judy won't not neither let Marian have his shovel. Judy mus' have shovel for diggin'."

"But, Judy, you dug up Marian's petunia bed. Marian told you that if you dug up her flowers the shovel would be taken away from you."

"No," Julian repeated, tersely, decidedly. "Marian leave Judy's shovel alone, 'relse Marian get slapped."

"Julian!"

The little fellow's face broke into a delighted smile. "Mummy! Is Bildavis going to play wiv us?"

"Judy must tell Marian he's sorry he spoke in that way."

"Won't," said Julian briefly.

"Must," announced Juliet, "or can't go to the harbor with Mother when she comes back."

Julian looked at her sidewise. This mother of his was a very fascinating person, and at present a great novelty. She had been out of his life for six months and Julian, though he adored her, felt that she must be shown her place as he had shown Marian and Nurse Mary theirs, also, Bildavis was there to hear.

"Won't," he said again, and smiled at her.

"Must." His mother smiled at him. Then she caught up her hat and walked to the gate. "Ready Bill, and don't stop to speak to Julian. Nurse Mary," she called to that stalwart young person, who had appeared in the doorway, "Julian can't play with his tractor or shovel, or go into Miss Marian's studio, while I am away."

"Wait for me," Julian roared.

"No," said Juliet, though her heart smote her.

"Julian must learn not to be naughty. Mother will speak to him when she comes back."

There was an uproar behind her. Marian Whately at the gate stopped Juliet. "Juliet, how can you leave him like that?"

Juliet turned and looked at her. "Must, Marian," and only Juliet knew how hard it was to say it. "The young man is by way of treating us all as slaves, and it's bad for him. Don't speak to him until he asks your pardon."

Marian was tearful as she shook hands with Bill Davis and asked him to come again. Juliet, her heart beating rapidly, went resolutely toward Bill's car, unheeding the roars that followed her.

They said very little as they wound through the crooked, narrow streets of the harbor.

To Bill it was an old story but Juliet, who had arrived by motor the night before, was surprised to note how large the town was. There were three drug stores. One specialized in bathing suits of a brilliant colour; another "soda par excellence"; the last carried a circulating library. There was a moving picture theatre in the old Opera House, which had its coming attraction blazoned across the front in large letters. The post office, meat, fish markets and bakeries, were all jostled by small gift and art "shoppes" of every description, and beyond was the harbor and the boats.

It all looked tremendously attractive this lovely morning, and Juliet felt that never had she breathed a more exhilarating air. Yet, already, the brief "season" was nearly over, the first of September would see its end, and the rooms in the boarding houses and in the neat fishermen's cottages along Harbor Road, were being gradually vacated by the students.

The crowd of artists and students made the streets look colourful. Old and young, they were a wonderfully

gay, picturesque group. Juliet looked forward to meeting many of them through Marian, who for years had been a member of the colony. This morning, she was merely an interested spectator. She wanted to orient herself, observe for herself and by herself, but Bill was with her and that fact disturbed her, especially when she thought of Julian. Circumstances had made it easy, hitherto, to keep Bill Davis and Julian apart, but now they had met and Juliet was afraid. She held no brief for either the extreme of stern, old-fashioned child-training, or the extreme of new and timid conciliation, but she feared the combination of Marian, Bill and Julian. Bill probably loaded every child he met with expensive presents in order to get rid of the little nuisances, and he was bound to take some such line with Julian. Well, after all, it was her problem, and Julian was a darling, and so was Bill.

Presently they crossed a bridge over a little inlet and left the harbor behind them. They rode through long stretches of pine and birch woods with no houses in sight, for this was the Drake estate. Finally they turned a corner and caught a breath-taking view of sky and water and the long, low, white front of Drake House, sunning itself peacefully.

Bill smiled at her a little diffidently as he went toward the door. "Don't hold me responsible, Juliet, for my somewhat difficult third cousin, twice removed, will you?"

Juliet shook her head as the door was opened by a tall, rather good-looking, old-young man, with a detached solemnity that Juliet could not conceive of meaning anything less than butler.

"Mr. Anthony in, True?" Bill asked.

"I'll see, sir. The morning room, please." True indicated a door, with a quick look at Juliet. A look that told Juliet he knew all about her arrival, and

doubtless had quietly discussed her and all that he could learn regarding her. She passed him and walked into one of the prettiest rooms she had seen in many days. It was evident that Mrs. Drake had taste. Dresden china taste, it is true, but Dresden china is pretty. The interior decorator had had sense enough to understand her desire to express herself, and had evidently given her sense of colour, which was good, free rein. A long, latticed window looked out on the rocks and the sea. It accentuated the wildness of that rocky coast to look at it from the shelter of this dainty room. The room was saved in that it was dainty only in its furnishings, the proportions were noble. Couches, davenports, arm and wing chairs all covered with the most colourful of chintz, were scattered about the room. Gate-leg tables, quaint book shelves and writing desks, a vast fireplace with a low, narrow mantel, and wide window seats well cushioned with the same chintz, made the room pleasant for any number of people to lounge in.

Juliet sank into one of the shallow easy chairs that exactly fitted her. She deliberately turned it so that it backed the light and the sea. She wanted to be able to study the faces of the people as they came into the room before they analyzed her own.

Tony Drake came through the doorway: "Hullo, Bill! What's it all about?"

"Thought you'd better meet Mrs. Jackson, Tony. She's a great friend of mine."

"Oh, any friend of yours," Tony said, though his voice was sullen, "but why drag any more women into this?"

"Can't help yourself, Mr. Drake," Juliet said, stretching out her hand without rising, as they came toward her. "We're always in everything, anyway, aren't we, whether wanted or not?"

"Oh, I didn't mean—" Tony began shyly, but Juliet only smiled as she shook his hand. He would be a handsome boy, she decided, if he smiled more. His heavy, dark brows were drawn together, and his mouth set, as he said: "You see, I know you're a newspaper woman, Mrs. Jackson, and I certainly don't want any publicity, though I'm glad to meet Julian's mother."

Juliet smiled at the boy. After all, she decided, that was what he was, a great, overgrown boy. His gruffness was merely assumed to cover a boy's reticence; a boy's reluctance to take older people into his confidence. Julian's mother recognized that this boy must be led, not driven. Then the Ferret thought of her case and said:

"Shall we talk it over quietly? I don't want to know anything except the facts. It won't hurt you to tell all you know. I won't publish anything without your consent, but you can't afford to keep everything from your friends."

"I don't want you to walk bull-headed into a murder trial without advice or help," Bill began.

"Do you dare to hint that I had anything to do with Jenny Weaver's death?"

"No," Juliet said quickly, surveying him with less calm than she had felt a moment ago, "he does not, but I'm telling you that there is not the slightest doubt that it will be as something more than an important witness that you will be held in the Weaver Case. Wealth, Mr. Tony Drake, can do many things in these United States, but it can't do everything. Once the law of the country is set in motion, just money won't stop the mill. It will grind along and, guilty or innocent, a man needs friends as well as money. Not to make use of weapons when they lie close at hand is a mistake. I am one of your weapons. Do you want to find yourself

helpless in the coils of the law, dragging everybody connected with you into glaring publicity?"

"Mr. Manning," announced True, from the doorway. "The county attorney, sir."

Juliet thought she detected just a little note of satisfaction in his voice, and gave True the benefit of her attention until Manning entered.

The attorney came directly toward Tony. He was nearly six feet, and so tanned that he looked like a handsome American Indian. He had a firm, straight mouth, which the country people would have called "a regular mean Maine mouth," if it had not been for the generous way in which it curved when he smiled. It was an orator's mouth, but in this man's case there was none of the weakness of chin which so often accompanies it. He glanced inquiringly at Juliet and Bill Davis and then, as Tony made no move to introduce him, said:

"Want a little talk with you, Drake."

Juliet found herself holding her breath. Was this sullen boy going to make things harder for them all by antagonizing this man at the beginning. She knew Bill Davis shared this anxiety. But, to their surprise, Tony smiled and, as he walked toward him, said: "Sure, Manning, I'm willing to tell you all I know. Let me introduce you to Mrs. Jackson and Mr. Davis, a cousin."

As she acknowledged the introduction, Juliet studied the man. He was clever, Juliet was certain, and no mean reader of men, but he had not been prepared to find anyone with Tony, or was it that he had thought he would not find Tony?

"I can't take time to talk this morning, but I'd like to see you to-morrow, about ten, and go over things. I dropped in instead of telephoning because you know what my telephoning you would mean in this town.

Everybody would know the county attorney was 'after' Tony Drake."

Tony laughed. "I appreciate your calling, yourself, Mr. Manning. I'll be there at ten."

They talked of everything but the murder for awhile, and Juliet watched Manning take his somewhat preoccupied way out of the house to his car.

It was, somehow, despite Manning's kindly manner, an ominous thing—his call. Juliet felt sure that Manning had stretched his authority to the utmost in giving Tony this warning and, moreover, Juliet had learned something about Tony Drake. He was both sensitive and shy. Juliet hated to think of the precocious, small boy who had been neglected, overlooked, browbeaten by inferiors in whose care he had been left, until he had developed the callous manner which, like some sort of defensive shell, covered an exceedingly sensitive nature.

He had walked to the door with Manning but came toward them now, frowning, his voice more than usually husky: "Does that fellow think I'm blind as well as dumb?"

"Why do you say that?" Bill asked, before Juliet could stop him.

"He saw me on the Commodore's yacht yesterday and he thinks I'm about to slip out of the state and his clutches. The fool! As though, if I wanted to get away, I couldn't—" He stopped abruptly and looked at Juliet.

Juliet smiled at him serenely. She ignored not only his refusal to accept her help, and Bill's, but also the county attorney's visit. She asked him with every evidence of having nothing else on her mind: "Who is True?"

"The butler," Tony stared at her in astonishment.

"Aside from being a butler, of course. Where does

he come from, and what did he do before he came here? Or, if you don't know that, how long has he been with you?"

Tony's jaw dropped as he looked at her. "True? Now why in thunder?" Then he laughed. "True's a native here. His family lived down near West Lost. He went to sea, and was on the Commodore's yacht as head steward. Mother gave him a chance as butler, and he took it, and kept it."

"H'm. Married?"

"Was before he came here. A widower; no children."

"Did he know Jenny Weaver pretty well?"

"I suppose so. Must have, since she was a maid here when he came as butler."

"How long ago?"

"Oh! Six or seven years."

"Thanks very much, and if you will keep the butler from knowing that I asked about him, more thanks."

"Why?"

"I don't care to have servants know my business, and while I'm on that subject you will note that I ask you no questions."

Tony nodded.

"Well, I won't ask you any in this house."

Both Tony and Bill came nearer her. "What do you mean by that?" they both asked her almost simultaneously.

Juliet shrugged her shoulders. "I leave you to guess, but if you will both meet me at Miss Jane Stover's shop, after business hours, we can talk together safely and sensibly without being overheard. I don't ask you to Miss Whately's studio because Marian is a dear, but she's porous. What she knows, the rest of the art colony knows sooner or later. So I propose the shop," she continued, well realizing from Tony's face, that she took her courage in her hand to do so. "I'll meet you

both there to-morrow night at eight-thirty, that will give us plenty of time. You," she said to Tony, "to think up just how much you mean to tell me, and Bill to get me all the data he can about True."

"True!" Tony looked at Bill. "Mrs. Jackson, you're crazy!"

"More or less," Juliet admitted. "We all are for that matter, but I want to know all about True. That is, all you can gather about him by to-morrow night, Bill. Where do Jenny Weaver's people live?"

"West Lost."

"Near True's people?"

"There aren't any of True's people left there now."

"Well, near where True's people used to live? By the way, when did the last True live there?"

"Four years ago."

"Before Jenny disappeared?"

"Before Jenny disappeared."

Juliet went down the steps.

"Mrs. Jackson," Tony began, "I won't——"

"Don't say it. No matter how meanly you think of my intelligence, don't say you won't have anything to do with me, or the case, or my investigation, because you'd have to eat every last word, Tony Drake, and it would only make your temper—uglier than it is now."

She went close to the boy. There was none of the imp about Juliet now, she was, though she would have been as surprised as the next to know it, very much like one of the lovely Bellini Madonnas, allowing for the fact that her hair was redder than any he painted. "Have some mercy on those who care about you and, though you have nothing to hide, be wary. There are traps being laid all along this wild shore for the express purpose of catching your blundering feet. If you will do a favour for Julian's mother, since you won't do it

for Bill Davis, come to-morrow night with an open mind and tell me just as much, at least, as you mean to tell the rest of the world. I'll tell you now something everybody doesn't know: That man Manning arrested Blaine Weaver early this morning."

She joined Bill before Tony could bring himself to ask her how she knew. He watched them go along the path to the car, then turned, startled. Alonzo True was standing beside him.

"What the devil do you mean by sneaking up like that?"

"Did you send for that woman?" True asked, without troubling to assume his butler-manner.

Tony backed away a little. "And if I did?"

"If you did, it's the worst day's work you ever did in all your blasted young life."

Juliet turned at the bend of the road and saw them standing together. "Master and Man," she said, and then added with a quick look at Bill: "and I'd give a lot to know who is master and who is man?"

CHAPTER IV

WEST LOST was a long walk from the harbor yet Juliet refused Bill's offer to drive her there, the day she decided to visit the Codeys.

Bill watched her take the Cove Road. Juliet was wearing her own particular shade of blue, and for some time the soft colour of her gown contrasted beautifully with the deep green of the fir trees. Finally, as a bend in the Cove Road hid her from sight, he went down the path toward Harbor Hill.

Juliet left the road, walked through the woods, along the shore, then inland to where the woods ended and the dusty road began again. It was longer than she had bargained for, but seeing Tony Drake had changed her viewpoint and she had much to think over. She might get something for her paper from the Codeys. After that she would see the prosecuting attorney, the county detective and such of the newspaper fraternity as were here, though they were more likely to be the Boston crowd. New Yorkers would not arrive in any number until the trial. She must know exactly what was being done, yet avoid the crowd and work alone.

The dingy, dilapidated-looking huddle of weather-beaten boards and bits of tin that made up the Codey homestead came in sight. The place had a sinister look. It was really whole, save for a window from which the winter's stoppage of rags had been removed. In Maine there is danger of cold and discomfort in a leaky house, and the Codeys loved their comfort. To obtain it they worked, when they must, and by prefer-

ence in the summer-time, when money was plentiful and domestic servants in great demand.

Like many people, not particularly neat themselves, Mrs. Codey was an excellent laundress. To get Ma Codey to undertake the washing for the summer was to have clothes as white as it is possible to make them. Her girls helped her when they were laid up at home from drink, want of cash or a "boy friend" with cash. Most of the summer there were far easier ways of earning money than washing, or the Codey girls thought so, and flitted from one summer household to another, exchanging their skill as waitress or as chambermaid, for so much a week. There always came a day when the housekeeper knew, from the glassy stare she encountered in the eyes of the Codey in her employ, that the term of employment was over. There was one woman who held the record for Codey assistance, or attendance, but she had installed a radio in her kitchen.

When a Codey had amassed as much as a week's pay ahead, or when their friends were making extra money, during the lobster season, or by "hauling" summer visitors in a boat, the Codey girls were to be found at home, lolling about ready to giggle over anything, with anyone.

Juliet had fortunately struck such a day. When she emerged from the wood on the little clearing in which the Codey and Hallay houses stood, Ma Codey was standing over the tub, for no patent washers were used. Arborea Codey, known as Rea, and Ethelana and Rhododendron, were hanging the clothes out. Between intervals they hung themselves over the rickety fence between their house and the Hallay house, and laughed gaily over the crude witticisms of Porter Hallay.

He was a gypsy-looking young man with sulphurous black eyes. He had set himself to the long delayed job of mending his dilapidated car. The machine could

barely hold together, but Porter, a genius, if he had had the concentration or the wisdom to develop his natural aptitude for mechanics, knew that he could make it run. Despite the giggles of the Codey girls, he was promising to have it ready soon, to take Rhody down Harbor way.

Juliet's appearance was a signal for the cessation of both work and conversation. Ma Codey leaned her stomach against the washtub and gaped at her. The girls gave themselves up to looking, which is really practiced as an art only in a rural community. They made no comments, yet Juliet, despite her many and varied experiences, could hardly bring herself to walk toward them in a natural manner, so deeply did they repel her, so difficult was it to move against this wall of silent criticism.

Yet, once let them resent her presence, or her errand, and she had lost them and, she believed, even at this late hour, a valuable opportunity. It was not so much that she knew that she could get something from them, as that she knew that she must try, and moreover, that unless she succeeded something would be for ever hidden that should be brought to light.

These morons might be cheerful, which would make her task easier, or sullen, in which case her lot would be a hard one. With these people, as with other and wiser, to be well intentioned was nothing unless one had sufficient wisdom to see, and take, the best and least irritating path to their confidence.

"Mrs. Codey?" Juliet directed her smile at Ma.

Ma grunted, but Juliet had already perceived that whatever small portion of brains remained in that family, were not all under Ma's frowzy hair.

"I said I wanted a walk, but no one told me how far it was to your place."

"Too far for ye, was it?" Ma smiled and the girls

burst into giggles. It was pleasant and exhilarating for them to think of some one belonging to the summer visitor class being tricked or fooled in any way.

"I'm so tired," Juliet continued, with another smile at Ma, "that if you were to offer me the end of the wash-bench, I believe I'd sit down."

There was another burst of silly giggles, interrupted by Ma's loud: "By Jarge and Judas, girls, give her a chair. You ain't so much, after all," she commented, with a grin at the tiny Juliet. "I cal'late that if you wear away any there won't be nothing left of you. Though fat ain't everything. Keeps the bones from sticking out too far, but that's about all."

Another burst from the girls, but there were still wary eyes watching Juliet from the fence.

"You look as though you had enough washing, Mrs. Codey, to last you a lifetime, but don't tell me you can't take mine, after I've walked all this way." Marian would hate having these people about, but Juliet would risk that.

"It's the mother of that cute little boy staying in Miss Whately's studjio," announced one of the girls at the fence, unexpectedly.

"Do you know my Julian?"

"Sure, he's a cute little kid."

It was almost gracious. Juliet leaned back and beamed at her. "I think he's wonderful, myself."

"All you got, I expect, and them only ones is jist heaven and earth until you get half a dozen more, and then by Jarge and Judas you find you ain't got time to fret over them."

Juliet, who had accepted the chair without a back which had been dusted for her, was wondering about the origin of Jarge and Judas and just why they should be bracketed together, but she responded, sympathetically: "Well, you should know, Mrs. Codey, from all I

hear, and I'm a newcomer. You've had your troubles."

She had not missed her opening. Mrs. Codey, who had been rinsing a silk stocking, threw it back into the water and sat down, herself, on the end of the wash-bench nearest Juliet. "You've said a whale's mouthful, I have seen trouble and troubles on top of that, Missus, and no one can say I haven't done my best."

"Surely no one thinks of blaming you—" Juliet began.

"They'd better not," said Rhododendron, with a jerk of her head covered with the wildest black curls Juliet had ever seen outside of the Harlem negro section. "Ma isn't to blame. She raised Jenny and all of us the best she knew how."

"It ain't us that'll have the blues at the judgment bar," declared Ma darkly. "It's some that I could mention, only I wun't, for I wun't talk before court day. Come court day and I'll get my chanst in the courtroom and lay low some that's high and mighty."

There were comprehensive nods from the others, and Juliet was quick to see that all she could get at this moment was vituperation, and suspicion afterwards, if she listened to it, so she simply sighed and said: "I'm sorry for you all. But, Mrs. Codey, do you think you could manage my washing?"

Mrs. Codey considered. "Well, this here looks like being busy, but it's a 'cumulation. Rained some yes-tiddy, and I had to hold it over, and them artists is fading away like now. No, I ain't got over and above what I can do except that things pile up on me, what with my having to go to the county seat so often and all that's hanging over me. Why, yes, if you can git the things to me. If you can git the wash to me come Tuesday, I'll see you git it back Thursday afternoon."

"How can I get it to you?" Juliet asked, sparring for time to study why it was she thought Rhododen-

dron was not as friendly as the others. She had kept shaking her head at Ma behind Rea's back.

"You can't send it by Harry Homer's truck, 'cause he's got a full load, but I can send Porter, and he'll git it."

"How much will it cost me to have you bring it down?" Juliet rose and went toward Porter, using her most engaging smile.

"Nothing, I'm doing it for Ma," Porter said, with a glance at Rhody, whose frown had deepened.

Juliet protested. "I think I ought to pay."

"Nothing doing. Ma and me's old friends." He grinned at Juliet. "Seems if I want to do Ma a favour there ain't nothing you can do to prevent me."

"Seems if," agreed Ma happily.

Juliet recognized that this was the occasion for another burst of giggles and started it with her gayest laughter.

"Well," Porter continued, "I'm going a step further and say that if you dun't mind setting right where you are, I'll have this here gas buggy ready to travel in three jiffs, an' if you and Rhody's ready, when I am, you can ride."

"If I can get a ride back to town I am not refusing it. I am ready when you are and, meanwhile, so that you may put your mind on your work, I'll talk to Mrs. Codey about something that's just come into my mind."

Juliet left the girls and the self-important Porter, and walked over to the washtub again, and Rhododendron's frown disappeared.

"Can you bear to have me speak about your daughter, Jenny, Mrs. Codey?"

Ma Codey nodded. "Got all over feeling it's my affair now. Such feelings as I have I keep to myself, seeing that everybody's talking about it and us."

"I have been wondering if you would mind my asking whether you had any letters of hers that you would show me?"

"For what?" Mrs. Codey's whole attitude had changed. There was something both hard and grasping about the way she said it.

"It isn't just for curiosity, Mrs. Codey. I work for a New York newspaper and I think I might be able to show a little of your side of the case before the trial begins."

"My side of the case," Ma Codey echoed. "What d' y' mean by that? And what's my side of the case got to do with a New York paper, Missus?"

"Newspapers have a lot to do with a case, Mrs. Codey. Far more than people guess. What I want is to let people know the best about Jenny. I don't need to tell you how the mere fact of Jenny being found—as she was—has set everybody hunting and tracking into her past life without regard for her memory, or your feelings."

"You've said it! By Jarge and Judas, you've said it! Sneaking and peeking and asking and snooping! Nothing but that's been going on since the news first leaked out that it was Jenny."

Juliet sighed unconsciously. She had feared that she might be driven from her perch on the rickety chair and out into the road. No need to tell Juliet the sort of viragoes these silly, giggling girls could turn into at a moment's notice, led by Ma Codey. Ma, though she appeared good-natured, was hot-tempered. Juliet had guessed that and across her mind's eye flowed the picture of what they must be like when they pitted their silly wits against someone like Alonzo True, for instance. Now, why had she thought of Alonzo True?

"Mrs. Codey, I don't believe all the stories they tell about Jenny. People say anything at a time like this.

They are anxious to show they know something others don't."

"Yeah, I know it. I've heard people that only seen my Jenny a few times, and she never letting on she saw them, claiming 'quaintance. Ain't it so, girls?" she asked of her daughters who had left Porter to finish patching up his car and drawn near to listen. They nodded with inquisitive glances at Juliet and at their mother. Rhody blurted out what was in her slow moving and resentful mind.

"Thought you wasn't going to let anyone talk to you 'bout Jenny, Ma?"

"I ain't," snapped Mrs. Codey. "Not to say talk. This lady here's got some sympathy and some feeling for us."

"Yeah," Rhody began, "but you said that about the man who took the letters after the newspaper man had offered five hundred."

"Who was that?" Juliet asked.

"Joe Forney, the sheriff's depitty," said Ethelana. "He took them letters of Ma's, by order of the state, and not a cent paid for them."

"What letters were they?"

"Letters Ma got from Jenny after she disappeared."

"Ah." Despite herself it escaped from Juliet's lips. Someone had been here before her with the same idea and someone would come after her with the same idea, unless she worked fast. "Did he take all the letters?" she asked.

Ma Codey stared at her without replying.

"Ma, dun't act so dumb," Ethelana advised scornfully. "You know they got them all, despite of what Rhody and me said. You was just Dumb-Dora enough to let them have all they asked."

"The law's the law," Ma Codey declared.

"Sure, and Joe Forney is a fellow you can't hold back nothing on," Rea announced.

"Oh," Ethelana's long lashes fluttered and her big, red, petulant mouth screwed up. "You both make me tired. With that newspaper fellow willing to give you all kinds of money the day before, a'course, you must take a night to think it over and, a'course, there was Joe here in the morning, first thing, to grab 'em off you. Why, in the Old Harry, you didn't close right up with the newspaper man's offer, I dun't know and never will."

"Look here, Ethelana, I stand no more lip! I've told you once, if I've told you a dozen times, that I had to think over whether it was right to let the poor child's letters git public or not."

"Well, you might as well have saved yourself. They'll be public all right, before Joe Forney gets through with them."

"Well, ain't I proved right, at that? Ain't Blaine Weaver been locked up? Though he ain't the only one that oughta be under lock and key. Blaine had help."

"Haven't you any of her letters left at all?" asked Juliet, hastily, anxious to stop a quarrel.

Ma Codey shook her head. "None of Jenny's."

"Any *to* Jenny?"

"What would you want those for?" Rhody asked sharply, as Ma stared and shook her head.

"Why, I'd like to know all about Jenny, and letters written to a person sometimes tell you as much as letters from the person herself."

Rhody looked dubious. Rhody had inherited some grey matter, from some one, and she was not sure about this skinny little thing with red hair. She did not mean Ma to miss another chance, however, if she could help it. Money was money and Rhody wanted her share.

She looked shrewdly at her mother, who had slumped

into her chair and was rocking herself back and forth. "Oh, my poor girl, my poor Jenny. Everybody picking on her when she lived, and everybody snooping about her when she's dead."

Juliet could not help agreeing that this mournful ditty told the truth about Jenny Weaver, but she fixed a hopeful eye on Rhody. That young person, after regarding her mother distrustfully, had suddenly and silently strolled toward the house.

"It's a shame." Juliet gingerly patted Mrs. Codey's broad back. "I do wish I could help you, and I think I can. If I come over again do you think you can tell me something about Jenny, when she was growing up, before she was married?"

"Sure, I could. Would you print it in your paper?"

"Some of it, anyway, and," trying out a successful line, "if you have a good photograph, I'll get your picture in the newspaper."

"A New York one?" Mrs. Codey stopped rocking and beamed. "My good Godfreys! The girls would certainly like that. Here, girls, come into the parlour and pick out the best pictures. This here lady's going to git them into a New York paper. Leastways she says she can."

"I promise you, if you'll just answer a few questions, I'll get them in."

The girls ran toward the house. Ma Codey waddled after them. Porter looked up from his repairing, and at Juliet, so shrewdly that she began to doubt her first cataloguing him as a good-natured moron.

"Say, you're a great one. Come a'strolling up here as innocent-looking as all get out, and you're a newspaper reporter! What kind of letters are you trying to get from Ma?"

She could hear Ethelana and Rea fighting indoors. Ten to one, she would never get anything. "I'd like

any letters they have from Jenny's husband or—say Alonzo True."

Porter rose to his handsome height and looked down on her. "What do you know about Alonzo True—and Jenny?"

Juliet smiled. Then, after a moment, as he still stared at her, she said: "True doesn't care to have it known, does he?"

Porter shook his head. "'Lon True's always cal'lated he was something wonderful ever since he went working for the Drakes and began running the Drake boy."

"He does run him, doesn't he?"

Porter shrugged his shoulders. Undoubtedly he too had Portuguese blood. That shrug was never natural to one born of Maine's original settlers.

"He do, and he dun't. He's running him now because that boy ain't waked up. One day he'll wake up and Alonzo wun't know where he's at."

"Think so?" Juliet was doubtful, remembering Alonzo True.

"Yeah, I know so. You can't run a man or a boy as hard as Lon's run Tony Drake 'less he ain't got any right spirit. Tony's kinda easy-going, and when he was a little fellow Tony was kinda easy scared, but stands to reason, now that he's growed up, Tony ain't goin' to stay that way."

"Why not?"

"He's got a girl now." Porter grinned. "Got a girl and can't afford to be fussed or scared."

"Are we talking about the same thing? I wonder? Do you mean that Alonzo True was interested in Jenny for himself, or interested in keeping the boy away from her?"

She realized that she was risking something. If this moron told True what she had asked, he might spoil her scheme.

Porter roared with laughter. "You are a deep one," he said admiringly. "You're cute and clever, but you ain't clever enough." He roared with laughter again.

Juliet looked toward the house with real apprehension. She could hear Ma Codey's voice uplifted in anger. What was happening in there, and would this fool out here tell her what she wanted to know, without getting out of hand?

"It was a silly thing to say. I wouldn't for the world have any one——"

"Don't you worry." Porter reassured her with a prolonged wink. "I won't tell True on ye. I guess I got more sense than to give Alonzo True a handle on any woman. Why even Jenny was afraid of him."

"Because of the Drake boy?"

"Well, True didn't want any rumpus down here because, if anything came out, he knew Miz' Drake'd send him packing. Miz' Drake'd let things go a long time rather'n be bothered, but when she moved she moved fast."

"He wanted to stay, then?"

"Sure. Miz' Drake's away a lot and he's practically boss down here when she's gone." He laughed grossly. "He has the hiring and firing and they're all women, 'cept himself—and Tony."

Juliet, disgusted with his meaning smile, asked a final question: "Then she was afraid of what he would say to young Drake?"

Porter shook his head. "She was more afraid of what he would say to her husband."

Ma Codey came flying out of the house followed by two of the girls. She rushed up to Juliet, panting. She had three photographs in her hand, and held them out to Juliet.

"Grab holt of them," she called, her face red and distorted. "It's come to this that I ain't safe in my own

house, with my own children. Them greedy girls wants everything themselves. What did you say you'd give me?"

"Ten dollars apiece, if you don't give any to anyone else or tell about them, unless they ask you on the witness stand; and then I expect you to tell the truth."

"Ten apiece!"

Ma Codey and the girls stood open-mouthed.

"I kin tell on the witness stand too!" She shouted it triumphantly at the girls.

Porter dropped his work and stared at Juliet. The girls looked at her with eyes that were narrowed to slits. Instantly she felt that she had done a dangerous thing. She was miles from any other house and these people were none too stable, and their reputation was not good.

"I haven't all that money with me, of course, but if one of the girls will drive down with Porter and the photographs to Miss Marian's studio, I'll give them cash. I can give you a cheque now."

The Codeys' eyes sought each other, then they looked at Porter. Almost imperceptibly he nodded.

"What say, girls?" Ma asked.

"Do as you like," Rhody advised sullenly.

Rea and Ethelana, who had joined them, nodded.

"It's Rhody that goes down with me," Porter said, "and the car's ready now."

Sullenly Rhody opened a vanity case in which the powder puff was black with usage, and also producing from its recesses a grimy little stub of lipstick which she proceeded to apply vigorously. The other two girls looked at her wistfully, then went toward Ma Codey, as she sank down on the wash bench. Juliet was looking at the photos she held in her hand. They were groups of Codeys taken while Jenny was still at home.

She felt a tug at her sleeve and turned slowly. Rhody

stood close to her, as the other girls hung over their mother and bargained about their share of the money, and Porter busied himself collecting his tools.

"Keep your eye on Ma," she muttered out of the side of her mouth, "and grab these."

She slid quickly into Juliet's hand what seemed to be three dirty pieces of paper. They were three notes, Juliet saw, in different handwriting. As she took them she glanced at the signatures: "Blaine," "Tony," and one that was signed with an initial "L."

"Fifteen apiece," muttered Rhody.

"It's a bargain," agreed Juliet and thrust, with eager haste, the three dirty pieces of paper into her purse.

Acc-No285

CHAPTER V

MARIAN'S studio, and Juliet counted it good fortune indeed, was empty when they arrived. Even the cook was down on the rocks fishing.

Juliet stayed indoors long enough to impress the two waiting in the garden that she had to search to get the money needed. She could see that it had been Rhody's lack of faith that any such price would be paid her that had clouded her eyes and stopped her tongue on the ride down. The sigh of relief with which she greeted the money for both photographs and letters was audible.

Porter's decrepit car started down the road. Juliet hurried to her room. The money for the letters was well spent, she told herself, even if they merely eliminated a clue.

As she eagerly studied the first one, a loud rap on the door startled her. She locked the letters carefully away when she remembered that she was alone in the house, and went toward the door with that queer sinking sensation that the mother of a very small boy experiences every time her darling is out of her sight.

Rhody stood there, her face reddened with anger, her eyes sullen. She held the money in her hand.

"You take it back and give me them letters," she shrilled. "I knowed all along you wan't what you said you was."

Juliet, who had by instinct the knowledge of when to be bold, stepped out and closed the door behind her. One could never tell about nearly-normals. They were not quite accountable.

"Control yourself and don't make a scene here."

The girl stared at her. She was used to seeing fear in the eyes of women when she had one of her "tantrums."

"You made the bargain, and you must stick to it. Take your money and go home."

"I'll not do that," Rhody screamed, and threw the money on the ground. "You give me them letters now, or there'll be trouble."

Juliet saw Porter waiting in the car, and called to him. He came hurrying up the path, trouble in his eyes. "Take that money to Mrs. Codey, and tell her to send a daughter who isn't crazy, when she wants the wash."

"Leave it be, Porter."

"Aw, shut up," Porter took the girl by the shoulder, spun her out of the way and picked up the money. He looked toward Juliet in a way that made her heart beat rapidly. Porter's attitude toward her had changed, too. He looked at the money in his hand and hesitated.

"I don't know what to do, Ma'm," he said, finally. "If you are hired by the Drakes to clear Tony Drake, and Ma knew it, she would be wild."

"Who told you that?"

"Nobody," Rhody shouted, "and nobody needs to. I've just seen that big man that visits with the Drakes coming along the path carrying your little boy."

"Oh," Juliet laughed with relief. "That's all right. Now listen to me. Mr. Davis is an old friend of mine. I am a reporter on a paper, not a detective. I haven't taken a cent of money and will not from any Drake, or from him. The only people I take money from are the people who run my paper. If the truth helps Tony Drake I'll print it just as fast as I'll print anything against him. Go home and remember that you pretty, crazy thing."

The girl looked at her, dumbly doubtful. Porter looked relieved.

"You will see me all over this town, with everybody. I am out to find the truth. That's what you want, isn't it? I know how you feel. You loved Jenny. It maddens you to think of someone walking around, free and careless, who killed her in that horrible way. Well, I feel that anyone capable of so treating a woman should be put where he can't do any more harm. I will do all I can to help find the murderer. Yes, and it doesn't matter who it is, even if it should be Porter, himself."

"My Good God!" Porter jumped back and stood staring at her.

Juliet laughed wholeheartedly.

Porter stared at her a moment dumbly, then turned to the sullen girl. "Guess we'd better be making for home." He gave her the money. She shook her head. "Don't be a fool," he muttered, put it in his own pocket, and turned to Juliet. "I kinda get your notion, but I'll have the hell of a time getting this wildcat home."

"Get what I've told you into both your heads. I don't want any more scenes."

Juliet stood watching them take their way toward their rattletrap machine. Her heart smote her. She hated those who misled the ignorant, who cannot protect themselves; but she must have a free hand. She could not be hampered by scenes and recriminations. She must be able to go where she wished in this town but, despite her promise, she knew that she would never visit the Codeys again.

She turned to go back into the house and found a breathless and indignant Marian confronting her. "I won't have the Codey tribe, any of them, coming to this house. It isn't safe for Julian—I won't have it."

Juliet had felt that, due to this case, her stay at the

studio might not be altogether desirable for Marian. It might cause Marian embarrassment and annoyance if Juliet sought out all sorts and conditions of people and brought them to the house, but she had been reluctant to speak to Marian. After this opening, however, she delayed no longer. She told Marian quietly that she must be free to conduct her business in her own way, free to bring anyone she wanted to her door. There was a small house higher up on Harbor Hill which was possible. The woman who owned it had been obliged to go abroad. It could easily be run by Nurse Mary and another maid, and it would relieve Marian of responsibility for Julian. She knew Marian could easily arrange for another guest in her stead, and Juliet was deeply grateful for all Marian had done.

Seldom is anything involving adjustment between two adult people of widely different temperaments, under the same roof, easy. After much misunderstanding, and many tears and entreaties from Marian, Juliet came to the conclusion that Marian feared strange people and a village murder trial far less than the loss of Julian. Moreover, Juliet was eminently social and her presence would make the evening gatherings at Marian's studio twice as interesting and far more generously attended. Marian, though she refused to admit this as a motive, did not want to lose this gay little redhead, who seemed to bring life and stir with her to the quietest spot.

Juliet realized, finally, that at present, though it might be awkward, and she might greatly inconvenience Marian, she could not take Julian abruptly away. Much as she would prefer her own place, much as she would like to have Julian under her authority alone, she was very greatly indebted to Marian, who, whatever her idiosyncrasies, had been good to Julian. So Juliet kissed Marian, and told her she would not leave her,

while Marian agreed, tearfully, that she would not interfere with Juliet in the pursuit of her lawful occupation.

At last Marian dried her tears, and together they went into the garden to wait for Bill Davis and Julian. Another reason why Marian must not lose Juliet. Was not Bill Davis one of the few men left in the rapidly thinning summer colony?

The little rocky street that ran from Harbor Hill and Marian's studio down to the harbor was alive with people coming from work to "supper", as it was called here. They could see Bill Davis stopping at the next gate, with Julian perched on his shoulder, to exchange a word with Commodore Blaney. Julian saw his mother and shouted:

"Look, Muvver, look at me! Look, Aunty Marian! I am a gi-unt. Bildavis's just my legs. I am Brains, so Legs got to go where I tell him."

Juliet smiled at the child and Bill. "Will Brains please tell Legs to come here as quickly as possible, for it's time the giant was fed."

Brains gave Legs a slight kick in the chest. "You walk on," he ordered. "G'bye, Com'dore. We'll come to lunch on *The Golden Bird* to-morrow, if you want us."

Juliet shook her head slightly at the Commodore and he patted one of the legs that really belonged to Brains and said gently: "I don't know whether I'll be on *The Bird* to-morrow, but I'd like to have you any time your mother can spare you. Good night, and sweet dreams."

"I'm going to dream I'm a gi-unt pirate," Julian shouted down to him as they moved away. "I'll have one of my feet on shore and one foot on *The Golden Bird* and shoot anybody who tries to get on board of her, except you tell me not to. I'll p'utect you because I like you a whole big lot."

The Commodore thanked him gravely, sighed

involuntarily as he remembered his only grandchild, a spoiled little rich girl, and turned to go indoors. The giant, Brains and Legs, came swiftly towards Juliet, but before they reached her, Julian saw Porter across the street in his car and called gaily to him. Porter looked up, and that look made Juliet stand still and wonder if she had seen aright. Almost as quickly as it had come, it was gone and Porter was smiling and waving at the little lad. But Juliet had seen. No need to remind her that the town legend was that Hallays had Indian blood. She had seen for herself what she mentally called "the tomahawk look". Henceforward, she would watch Porter, not only for this case, but for Julian. Nurse Mary should be warned to keep them apart. Then, as Porter's car rattled away, and she went toward her darling she laughed to herself. She must, indeed, be letting this case get on her nerves, or why was she so frightened and so oddly jealous of Julian? Yet she allowed Bill and Marian to go with Julian to the nursery, since Bill had consented to dine with them.

After dinner some of Marian's friends called and Marian went with them to the picture theatre, but Bill and Juliet stayed in the moonlit garden, while Juliet told her news and learned that the county attorney had postponed his talk with Tony and that Tony absolutely refused to meet Juliet at Jane's shop. Bill wanted, of course, to see the letters Juliet had bought.

"I want to go over them first myself, carefully, and then I'll be glad to show them to you and see what light you can shed on them. They may, of course, be absolutely of no account. We have got to take that into consideration."

"By the way, Tony's mother sent for him. Told him to get the Commodore to bring him to Newport till this blows over. The Commodore came to me."

"Don't tell me, if he's thinking of smuggling young Tony on board *The Golden Bird*."

Bill shook his head. "Not the Commodore. He's a good citizen. I couldn't lay my hands on Tony, and I couldn't find True, either. The maid said they had gone fishing this morning."

"Fishing! Tony and True!"

Bill nodded. "And yet, when I called in the afternoon with the Commodore, she said that she must have misunderstood, for True was just back from Wellbridge, where he had been seeing about some freight. New garden furniture for the terrace, I believe. Tony had gone out early this morning by himself, and nobody knew where he had gone."

Juliet was silent for a moment, then she went indoors and telephoned. She rang up the Drake House and, as she waited for the number called softly to Bill who had followed her: "You take the call. After all, I'd better not appear interested."

Bill took the receiver from her. "Who is this? True? This is Mr. Davis. Has Mr. Tony Drake come home yet? No? Is this usual? What? I'll be there right away." He slammed the receiver on the hook and turned to Juliet with a white face. "Young Tony hasn't come home yet, and they found his boat, bottom side up, in Drake's Cove."

"Get your car out of the Commodore's garage and bring the Commodore. True likes to stand well in his eyes," Juliet ordered. "We'll get over there, at once. Nurse Mary's on duty to-night."

Drake House lay smiling in the moonlight as Juliet, Bill and the Commodore alighted at the door. True opened it with every aspect of the gravely concerned butler, who is not only the servant but a friend of the family he serves.

"No news, Mr. Davis," he said, before Bill could

speak. "I have had a power boat out searching the cove and the beach."

"Have you had any word as to whether the lad has been seen in the village?" The Commodore asked it impatiently. "A boat upside down doesn't necessarily spell calamity, especially if you don't know certainly whether he was in the boat or not."

True's manner was still correct, but something had gone out of his voice when he answered the Commodore. Juliet was positive that he would like to get rid of them all and manage this affair in his own way.

Juliet saw a very pretty girl in a maid's uniform cross the hall to the dining-room. She walked toward the dining-room, while True was being questioned by the two men, idly stopping to look at a picture in the hall. When she entered the room the girl gave one swift look out from under her long eyelashes and then turned back to her work of clearing the untouched table. Juliet spoke to the pretty young back.

"Why didn't you tell Mr. Davis that Mr. Tony Drake left the house alone, this morning?"

The girl started, by a miracle she saved the china dish she was handling, and then stood shaking with fear as she looked at Juliet. "How did you know?"

"Never mind how I know," said Juliet quickly. "I would advise you, if you know on which side your bread is buttered, to tell me, at once, all you know."

The girl stood shaking. "Miss, how can I tell you anything with him liable to round on me?"

"He won't," declared Juliet with more confidence than she felt. "Mr. Davis won't let him bother you. Besides," she added curtly, "you should be ashamed of yourself. Mr. Davis is bothered enough without adding to his troubles."

The girl began to cry.

"Stop it," Juliet ordered and saw again, in one quick

glance, that no one had followed her and that the bend in the hall hid her from True. "Dry your eyes and tell me what you should have told Mr. Davis. Be quick about it, and I will let you go before True comes."

The girl picked up the tray and started to go toward the door. Juliet put a hand on her arm. "Not before you tell me. Be quick, or I'll call out and you will have to tell everything before True."

The girl put the tray down again and stood twisting her apron.

"Come, when did Mr. Tony leave here this morning?"

"At about seven."

"Did he go toward the boat?"

The girl nodded.

"Then why did you change your answer to Mr. Davis?"

"Because Mr. True told me to say that Mr. Tony didn't go with him in the motor boat."

"Oh, then True was out in the motor boat to-day?"

"Yes, Ma'am."

"Did they leave the house at the same time?"

"Mr. Tony left a little before True did."

"And the overturned boat?"

"That was Mr. Tony's own boat. Mr. True said Mr. Tony took it out and went fishing by himself."

"Did Mr. Tony take anything to eat with him?" Juliet asked.

The girl shook her head. "The cook says he didn't."

"Did True?"

The girl nodded. "Cook says he did."

Juliet considered. "Do you know anything more?"

"No, indeed, Ma'am, not a thing."

"Next time tell Mr. Davis, or tell me, what you know. Don't tell us what you are told to tell." She watched the girl out of the room and then sauntered toward the hall. As she expected, True came hurriedly toward her.

"They're asking for you, Ma'am, in the library." True gave a sharp look about him. "The gentlemen don't seem to know what to do, Ma'am." He regarded her shrewdly. "It's baffling and no doubt about that."

Juliet went toward the library without answering. It might be mistaken devotion on the part of True, and that he thought he was helping the Drake family by his present attitude, but whoever had advised Tony Drake to disappear was bungling things badly for Tony.

Bill Davis, his hand on the telephone, turned a puzzled face toward her.

"Don't telephone, Bill. Send True down town to ask Miss Jane Stover if she has seen Tony. If she hasn't, then have him go to the Commodore's yacht and ask the men on board if they saw him or his boat to-day. Were you out in a boat to-day, True?" She asked the question softly but unexpectedly, as True entered.

True's start was unpremeditated and his brows were drawn together: "Might have stepped into one of the boats for a moment, Ma'am, but——"

"But most of the time you were at the Wellbridge station superintending the hauling of the garden furniture."

"And doing the marketing," True added.

"And doing the marketing," Juliet repeated. "Well, try Miss Stover, and if anything is reported here, we will telephone you there."

"Very good, Ma'am."

Juliet talked at random until she heard the car start, then snatched up the telephone. "Give me Western Union. It's at the station at Wellbridge. Will it be open, Bill?"

Bill nodded. "The last train hasn't come in yet."

"Out into the hall then, please Bill, and see if there is anyone listening. If there's an extension, listen in yourself."

As Bill left the room the Western Union operator, who was also the station agent, informed Juliet that True had been there late that afternoon, had only remained a few moments, after giving instructions to Wayland Brothers, who did most of the hauling there, to look after the furniture. They were coming out with it to-morrow morning. Lon True did a lot of business there, and they were always on the job for Lon. Juliet rang off.

Late in the afternoon, and Tony had left the house in the morning. True had had the greater part of the day to do whatever he had planned to do.

Rapidly she told the two men of the maid's admission, for Bill had come down the stairs and into the room immediately her telephoning had ceased. The housekeeper, he reported, had been hanging about the hall.

Leaving the Commodore on guard in the house to see that True did not call up or give any orders, Bill and Juliet, taking electric torches with them, went down to the landing place.

Tony's boat, or rather the boat True had said Tony used, and which they had found deserted and brought in, lay upturned on the landing stage. The small power boat True had said he had used in the search was there also.

"We ought to have the Commodore," said Bill, "if we are going to fool with these boats in the dark. He knows motor boats and the coast here better than anyone else."

Juliet nodded. "You are right. Up to the house as fast as you can go, Bill, and bring the Commodore back with you. Be sure to tell the housekeeper that we are just going to walk along the wood road with the electric torches, in case she's hovering about. It's always useful to have an alibi. I think True will be calling up

soon and he certainly has his assistants properly trained and terrified."

"He wasn't very keen on his job."

"Of course he wasn't," said Juliet, frowning, "especially as he knew nothing would come of it. Hurry!"

Bill gone, Juliet thought hard, and finally stepped into one of the canoes and went out to the power boat. It was long, handsome and had a cabin. After turning her torch on the foot prints on the white floor of the deck, she tried looking through the two cabin windows. She looked a long while, and was still looking when Bill and the Commodore came hurrying down the path. She signalled them, as they approached, to come out to her. She was still looking in the cabin window when Bill scrambled up the side.

"Shade your eyes with your hands, while I hold the torch, and look through this window. What do you think you see?"

"Nothing," said Bill promptly. "Great Scotland Yard! Juliet! That might be——"

"It is," said Juliet, moving aside so that the Commodore, who was puffing a little, might look too. "Do you know where the key of the cabin is usually kept, Bill?"

Bill nodded. Leaving the others he went back to the boat house. He looked back toward the boat. The Commodore was looking about for something with which he could smash the window, but Juliet restrained him. Bill went hurriedly to the locker where the keys and tools were kept and helped himself.

When he reached the motor boat again, Juliet laid her hand on the keys he had collected. "If it can possibly be avoided, I would rather not have Alonzo True know as much as we do, when he returns. A smashed window or door is bound to give things away."

The Commodore was already at work with a bit of wire on the keyhole. Bill looked at them both in surprise. Their faces were tense with excitement.

The Commodore turned and nodded to them as the door swung slowly open. Big Bill and Juliet, holding their electric torches, stepped past the Commodore, who was still kneeling, picking up his tools.

Tony Drake, eyes bandaged, tied hand and foot and gagged, but not too tightly, was lying on the long locker seat that ran along one side of the cabin.

Bill rapidly tore the bandage from his eyes, cut the rope that bound him, with his pocket knife, and untied the gag, a large silk handkerchief. Tony gasped and stretched himself.

"Water," was all he said.

Juliet was first to see the filled carafe on the table and reach for it. "How long—" she began.

Tony was busy drinking and paid no attention to her. Juliet's quick eye could see that the things in the cabin were not greatly disarranged. Someone had been in there and made things tidy only recently.

"How long have you been without food?" she asked.

"Since breakfast," said Tony, handling his wrists tenderly and blinking at her.

"Who—" Bill demanded.

"I don't know."

"But, Tony, that's absurd, you must know who tied you up and left you here."

"I don't," Tony repeated doggedly. "I only know that I landed at a nice woody place and someone came up behind me while I was fussing with my bait, threw my sweater over my head, blindfolded me and tied me, then brought me to this boat."

"But it's one of your own boats!" Juliet echoed, and then was annoyed at herself. She should have let him explain, or refuse to explain, as the notion struck him.

"I didn't know that until now. I tell you he had pulled the sweater over my head and shoulders and when he bandaged my eyes and tied me, he had a sack over his head, with slits for his eyes."

They watched him silently as he rose and flexed his arm muscles. "How did you get here?" he asked.

Bill glanced at Juliet, who appeared sunk in thought and adverse to conversation, and told him how they had been warned of his disappearance.

Tony volunteered that he had been cautioned that if he valued his life he had better keep quiet.

Juliet was regarding him with inquisitive eyes in which there lurked baffled curiosity. "Do you mean to tell me, Mr. Anthony Drake, you don't know who jumped on you, tied you up and put you on this motor boat?"

Tony shook his head.

"Didn't even recognize the voice?"

Again Tony shook his head and this time he flushed. "I was too scared," he confessed, shamefaced, "to do much of anything but try not to play the fool."

Bill patted his shoulder. "I would have been scared, myself," he added untruthfully. "I say, old fellow, did you have any suspicion that it was—" he said it before Juliet could stop him—"Alonzo True?"

"True! Alonzo! Bill, you are talking through your hat! I should have known instantly if it had been True. Why should he get such a fool notion as to try to get me away now?"

Since Bill had said what should have remained unsaid, Juliet thought Tony might as well have a good excuse, in case Alonzo True shook this conversation out of him.

"We thought he might be labouring under the delusion that to get you away to another State would please your mother and help you out."

Tony shook his head again. "I know it wasn't Lonny True," he asserted, "because, although his face was hidden by the sacking, I should have known Lon's hands. Nobody could mistake his crooked little finger."

Juliet sighed as she rose. There went one of her theories. If Alonzo True had not tried to kidnap Tony Drake, who had?

CHAPTER VI

IT was agreed that they would keep the attempt to kidnap Tony to themselves for the present; that True should be told that Tony had been lost in the woods, after the capsizing of his boat, and that they had found him on the shore. The same story was to be told the maids, the housekeeper and the general public, if the news should leak out.

The question as to the advisability of allowing Tony to continue to stay at Drake House was hotly argued. Juliet found both Tony and the other men adverse to a change in Tony's place of residence at this stage of the game. Tony declared that it would look as though he had been frightened, if he moved now. Bill was anxious not to rouse the curiosity of the general public by any unnecessary move, but was equally anxious about Tony's safety. Juliet was indifferent as to the general public. Let them think what they pleased, but get Tony away. As to who was at the back of the futile kidnapping, and its real object, Tony apparently could not, or would not, help them.

He set his sensitive mouth firmly. He would stay in his own house until after the Weaver trial.

It was on the way back to the harbor, Tony riding down to town with them, on his way to the fireman's dance, which he was determined to attend, in order to show the town and the county attorney that he was on call, that they met True and made the necessary explanation. Juliet watched True. He was quite openly annoyed and perturbed, but did not help Juliet to any satisfactory conclusion. It occurred to her that

if he had planned, with an accomplice, the kidnapping of Tony Drake, he might have had the same reaction at the failure of his well laid plans.

Before they reached Juliet's garden gate, they passed Rhody and Porter, on their way, as Porter explained, to the dance. Porter came to the edge of the sidewalk and signalled them. As the car came to a full stop he grinned at Juliet cheerfully. His look swept the three men with her, lingered on Tony, smiled at him, and rested on Big Bill with admiration.

The Commodore was an old resident and well known to Porter, although they did not speak. The Commodore's yacht was a lovely thing and everyone in the harbor, whether fisherman, boatman or landsman could appreciate that, consequently the Commodore was as well known in the town as the Civil War Monument at the hotel square.

"Ma says it's all right about the washing," Rhody told Juliet, quite as though nothing had occurred, "so Porter and me'll be down for it."

"Sure, couldn't let Rhody fetch it herself," Porter added and grinned at Tony. "Heard you got lost, Tony."

Juliet was startled. "How could you know that," she asked purposely, "when we have just found him?"

"Why, you told Lon True, didn't you? He telephoned to your house just when Rhody and me stopped to tell you about the wash. I took the message for Nurse Mary."

True, unless he had stopped before he reached Drake House, had not had time to telephone. Juliet looked toward Tony. There was nothing in Tony's face or manner, however, to indicate anything but a desire to get away. He explained that he was going to the firemen's dance too, and promptly got out of the car to join Rhody and Porter. It did not seem to disturb

Bill or the Commodore to see him walk away with such odd companions, so Juliet concluded it was quite in the Lost Harbor manner, and said nothing about how it disturbed her.

At her gate the Commodore left them, with a quiet word or two that told Juliet she had a friend in readiness whenever she needed help. Seeing the studio lights, Juliet concluded Marian had returned early from the movies, and invited Bill in to answer the questions Marian was sure to ask. To her surprise, Marian was not home, but Manning, the county attorney, was waiting.

Before Juliet could speak he rose and held out to her a letter. "From Abel Buckman, the best detective in the East," he told her. "As soon as I knew you were the Female Ferret, I came to welcome you. I'd no idea when I met you at Drake's—" he hesitated.

"Yes, I know, I ought to be fat, settled and elderly, but——"

"Thank God you aren't. This is the nicest thing that has happened to me this summer." He smiled. It was a whole-souled, warming smile, yet Juliet thought she detected also a little sly amusement as his glance took in Big Bill, who was not too pleased to see him. Manning was evidently disconcerted to find her openly championing young Drake. He wanted her to work with him for the State.

Quietly Juliet laid her cards on the table. She told Manning she was there to help, if she could, to get Tony Drake out of the net which the county attorney admitted was drawn around him. She stated that she was not a detective, was not receiving money for what she was doing, except in a legitimate way, from her paper, for news.

The attorney acted as though he believed her, though Juliet was not quite sure that he did. However, in

the end he would learn that Juliet Jackson did not lie nor take bribes, and meantime she must be patient. She was willing to work with him provided it did not preclude her working for Tony Drake. Were they still determined to arrest the boy?

As to this the attorney made no secret. They were only waiting corroboration of certain evidence to arrest Tony Drake as Blaine Weaver's accomplice. Once the bones had been identified as Jenny Weaver's, Tony was suspect, and every day the suspicions had been growing stronger. He would give Juliet what news he could, with reservations. Juliet's heart sank as the county attorney outlined certain facts in their case against Tony.

"Mind you," he said, "I am not, for you cannot expect it of me, going to tell you all I know, but I will say one thing: Everybody in this case has an alibi, except Tony."

"Who is 'everybody'?" asked Juliet.

The county attorney shook his head. "That's asking too much, Mrs. Jackson. At first virtually the whole town was suspect, but with the discovery that it was Jenny Weaver, the suspicion practically centred on two men."

"And those two?"

"Tony Drake and Blaine Weaver."

"And now?"

"Well, we've got Blaine, though he declares he has, and gives what he calls, a sure-fire alibi. He declares the man we want is—Tony Drake." The attorney had brought this out slowly and reluctantly, his eyes fastened on Juliet to note her reaction.

One had only to see the county attorney's face to know that he was a man who would move with due caution through the tortuous paths of the law. This good-looking Mr. Manning's head was, in the language

of the country side, well screwed on. It would not be from lack of looking well to right and left that this man would take a step.

Juliet asked a question that made the attorney look up with interest: "Have you questioned Alonzo True?"

"Oh, yes, I've asked him some questions."

"Did he answer them?"

"Reluctantly, but still, he answered them."

"And they tend to incriminate Tony Drake even more deeply?"

The attorney nodded.

"Does Alonzo True stand high and dry and out of the stream of suspicion in which so many were plunged in this case?"

The attorney looked at her astonished. "I have never heard Alonzo True's name mentioned by anyone in connection with Jenny Weaver."

"No?" questioned Juliet. "Well, then, I mention it now and remind you that Jenny Weaver was for some time an inmate of the Drake household, and that True had what the country people about here call 'the hiring and firing' in that household, and he fired her."

"That's so," the county attorney admitted, "but that doesn't alter the fact that there must be something more to connect True with the case than the fact that Jenny Weaver worked at the Drake House."

Juliet nodded. "I have that something." She noted the involuntary start the county attorney gave. "Come, there is no reason why you and I should not work together. I am out for whatever I can get for my paper. Privately I don't believe Tony Drake should be arrested. Nothing in the facts told me lead me to believe it. If you can show me facts that convict Tony, my paper will print them."

"What have you against True?"

Juliet smiled at him. "Didn't you hear what I said, Mr. County Attorney? I am willing to share some of my discoveries with you—if you share some of yours with me."

The county attorney's dark eyes twinkled.

"That isn't usual."

"I know it isn't," Juliet interrupted impatiently. "Doing the unusual causes unusual things to happen. Come, show me your hand."

"Can't do it," the attorney said. "The county and state detectives would be jealous."

"What can one lone woman, here on a visit, do against several stalwart men, whose native heath this is? I'm going to call on them to-morrow, listen to them, and give them something in exchange." She laughed at the question in his eyes. "I never bribe, but what I have now would be of great service to you."

The county attorney considered her gravely. Though he had never seen Juliet before, he knew her reputation. Yet a county attorney, with a murder case which is attracting state wide, even national attention, must move cautiously. He must not be too easily swayed by a New York reporter who was also a pretty, young woman. Moreover, he strongly disapproved of women in this business. It was with difficulty he restrained himself from telling her to leave murders and murderers to the men who were paid to think about them.

Juliet, who had lived through the same crises many times, sat patiently waiting for him to forget that she was an attractive woman and remember that she had business to transact. It took time. The attractiveness of the woman is often a hindrance, instead of a help, and where a man would get to his point in ten minutes it takes longer for a woman to wade through sex prejudice or sex attraction to her objective. Juliet,

an earnest and intuitive student of psychology, watched her man. It was not that he disliked attractive women, but that he was determined not to let this one influence his judgment. He sat playing with a paper-knife, glancing up at Bill Davis.

"Ever heard of Abel Buckman?" Bill asked suddenly.

"Of course I've heard of Buckman. One of the finest detectives I've ever met."

Bill tried again: "Ever hear of Andrew Dickerson?"

At last he had struck a responsive chord. "Dickerson's one of the finest and most brilliant criminal lawyers in the country. I tell you that man knows the law and all its tricks, little and big, and——"

"Well," Bill interrupted impatiently, "wire Andrew Dickerson, and get his opinion of Juliet Jackson."

Juliet laughed. It was funny, and a little sad too, to have Bill Davis boasting about her successes. "You've forgotten the Female Ferret side of my character," she explained to Manning, though she detested her nickname.

"Glad to hear anything you have to say," the attorney said, staring at her. He had, indeed, forgotten. He hardly believed it yet. "Go ahead, what have you unearthed?"

"Oh, I haven't solved the mystery yet, by any means. It is only in books that one sniff of the air and one casual glance about the place enables the great amateur instantly, without hesitation, to name the murderer or form his theory which nothing ever shakes or alters."

"My God!" exclaimed the attorney with feeling. "Books! I wish some of those cocksure writers had this case on their hands. I tell you it took weeks to be sure it was Jenny Weaver, and with every clue buried

for three years, I am as far as ever from any conclusion."

"Yet you involve Tony Drake?"

"I won't go any further just now, and with you, than to say that we have unravelled several things that look pretty nasty for the Drake youngster, and Blaine Weaver, though they pretend to hate each other." He hesitated. "How much will you use for your paper now?"

"Nothing that you are not ready to give out," was her prompt reply.

The county attorney considered: "So far, all the detectives have been able to glean is that Tony was 'too thick' with the Weaver girl; while she was at the house. She left the house because she was told to get out. Tony was with her the night she disappeared from town, before or after the husband left her at the boarding house where she was working. They were all three together and something happened, while they were together. The question we can't decide yet is, when did Drake last see her?"

Juliet considered the facts carefully. "You have proof positive that he was with her that night?"

The county attorney nodded. "They are working on time and place now. Pretty difficult after three years."

Juliet nodded. "Shall we send Mr. Davis away, or let him in on what we have? I'll go bail he'll keep his tongue still."

The attorney hesitated.

Bill rose. "It's all right," he said to Juliet. "I'm discreet, but I'm Tony's cousin. I'd better not know—what I can't tell him." He shook hands with Manning and left them.

As the door closed the district attorney took out of his pocket, and passed to her, a long envelope full of

carbon copies of reports and statements. "There," he said, "is as much as I know, within limits."

Juliet glanced through the huge envelope so rapidly that the county attorney looked with marked disapproval at her. How could this be the Female Ferret he had heard of with so much interest. Why she was skimming through stuff that any ordinary detective would have read with care and then made elaborate notes.

"Not much there that isn't general knowledge," Juliet said, indifferently, concealing from him the fact that what she was looking eagerly for was Alonzo True's depositions or Blaine Weaver's. Neither appeared. Was it possible that he had not secured any statement from them? She glanced through the papers again. No, there was nothing here. He had removed them from the portfolio and they were doubtlessly safe in his office.

"No depositions," she said, smiling at him, and passed the portfolio back to him.

"Not until they are offered in evidence. They might help Drake's lawyer to establish some sort of alibi. You see, you are friendly toward Drake."

"Yes," Juliet admitted. "I am going to be more generous than you are, I am going to show you a little bargain in literature."

The county attorney looked at her idly, wondering why hair that colour could look like gold one moment and dead autumn leaves the next. He forgot, for an instant, Juliet's reputation as a shrewd investigator, and wished she would get through the ugly business and be simply friendly. He wondered if she would lunch with him to-morrow. It would cause quite a bit of talk in this quiet little town, but he would like that. Then he looked at the dirty papers she was handling and forgot everything but the case.

Juliet spread out before him on the desk the three pieces of dirty paper. The first read:

"Deer Jinny: dunt be so goddam silley. I wil be at Hickeys after soper and tek you to fireman karneeval and home after bigod. You watch me.

Yure luvvin hosban
BLAINE WEAVER."

The second letter was incredibly wrinkled, dirty and soiled, but it was still legible:

"Dear J.,

I'll leave the carnival early and be at the turn of the path. If he is ugly, call and I'll come.

Tony."

The third letter was the worst of the lot as to dirt and creases, but it too was still legible and read:

"Darling,

I will be there, after the carnival closes. Come as soon as you can and alone.

L."

The county attorney took each note and examined it carefully. "Heavens, what a haul!"

"And what a situation," Juliet answered. "Do you realize that these are all appointments for the same night? She went down that path with one man, knowing that another man was coming to meet her; that still another was within call if she needed help. Now did she go down that path alone, or with Blaine

Weaver? Was it against Blaine Weaver or Lon True, for I'm sure the 'L' note was his, that Tony Drake hoped to protect her by staying within call?"

CHAPTER VII

EARLY next morning, in the car she had hired for a month, Juliet was on her way to the county seat, and the attorney's office. The precious letters, which she had refused to allow Manning to take last night, but had agreed to study with him to-day, were in her purse.

It was a lovely road, though rough in spots, which led to the county seat, and her heart felt light, but her mind was occupied with the problem of Blaine Weaver's "cast-iron" alibi. She had heard that Blaine lived on the same rough road as Porter and the Codeys, but she was reluctant to go down there again alone. The house might be closed now that Blaine was jailed, but his family lived toward South Lost. She turned her car in that direction. The district attorney could wait awhile.

Near the house, which bore a sign: "Weavers egs and vejutubble," painted on a rough board, she met Rod. He was driving his truck, loaded with logs. He looked up as she passed him, signalled her and stopped.

"You going in the right direction, Miz' Jackson?" he called as Juliet slowed up and finally stopped. "South Lost's a pretty lonesome spot for a lady all by herself."

"Why, they're building a cottage at the Point, aren't they? That ought to make it safe enough."

"Well, it's kinda late in the season and there ain't but one or two of them cottages open now, Miz' Jackson. And by this and by that, they ain't any too occupied. Just being sort of aired like, be caretakers."

"Well, then I can't get into very much mischief."

"S'pose not," Rod agreed dubiously, and then brightening up: "Well, I'm a going to deliver this load of stuff thataway, anyhow, so you can just trail along and I'll keep an eye on you."

But Juliet Jackson never trailed along. "Thank you immensely, Rod, but I don't think I need any help, yet."

He gave her a shrewd look: "Going to try to get something outa Bet Weaver? Well, you wun't get it, that girl's one exception to a whole state full of Maine females. She doesn't even *want* to talk. 'Tain't natural. I dun't know that Bet's got all her buttons, but she sure is careful not to let anyone know what she knows."

"The house doesn't look attractive."

"You've said a mouthful. Bet and her mother are as strong as pack horses, but they kinda save their strength when it comes to doing house-work. Them women can work like horses berryin' or out'n the vegetable patch, or gardenin'. Notice their flowers?"

Juliet nodded.

"Well, they got the nicest garden patch that's anywhere round and that's as fur as they go. They'd rather be agrubbin' with their hands in the sile, than touch a dish-cloth or a mop. My! My!" Rod broke out afresh. "The only time Blaine Weaver ever had a clean table to set down at, was when he married Jenny." He stopped, and asked: "You won't speak of Jenny Weaver there?"

She shook her head. It was really none of his business, but Rod was evidently not just being curious now, although curiosity seemed to be the main spring that moved most of these country people.

Rod breathed an audible sigh of relief. "Judas! I'd ought to have given you credit for good horse sense. I kinda feared you'd broach that subject with Bet.

She hated Jenny. Not a kinda dislike, but a wild, blazing, screaming hate. There's nothing that Bet Weaver wouldn't of done to Jenny, except that, much as she hated Jenny, she loves Blaine. Blaine Weaver can't do no wrong as far as his sister Bet's concerned. If you haven't anything nice to say about Blaine, best stay away from Bet, Miz' Jackson."

"Thank you, I'll remember. But why did she hate Jenny so much?"

Rod laughed. "Reason isn't far to seek. How many sisters-in-law love each other? Then Bet never looks anything but a slut and a slattern, while Jenny was pretty and clean. That caused their first fight, you know. Blaine, he brought Jenny home here and the next morning she told him that he either got a couple of rooms for themselves, where she could have things nice, or she went home to her mother and stayed there.

"I always think that Jenny must have been half-seas over when she married Blaine, anyway. Judas! They say that that first morning you could hear the fight at Weavers' place all the way to Lost. Blaine's Ma, you ain't seen her yet, was cursing and Bet was ready with the broom. Blaine's Pa, and you ain't seen him yet, either, was cursing rich. Blaine, he was yelling part of the time at Jenny, and part of the time at the others. Bet made a pass at Jenny with the broom and Jenny went running down the road, and Blaine after her. They borrowed enough to start house-keeping in Lost. Yeah, the Weavers is sure rabid when it comes to their likes and dislikes, and I wouldn't haunt this here road much if I was you, Miz' Jackson," he concluded as he started his car.

The Weaver house was old, weather-beaten and unpainted. Juliet stopped her car and went toward the door. It was evident that the front door was never

used. The side door, which was open, had a wide step, cluttered with chickens. The back door was evidently the doorway of entrance and toward it Juliet made her way.

A very plump and frizzy young female, with short skirts and without sleeves in her dirty red dress, stood in the doorway, gaping at Juliet. Two or three mangy-looking dogs of the hound variety came rushing around the corner. They ceased their yapping when they saw the girl in the doorway. She took up a stick and drove them away.

"What you want?" she demanded.

"A clock," said Juliet blandly. "I heard you had three or four good old clocks and I thought maybe I could buy one."

The girl surveyed her darkly. "After antics, heh?"

Juliet nodded. She smiled at the girl. "The woman I'm buying for is crazy about them." She continued to smile at the girl as though they shared a joke between them.

"I'm for something new every day, ain't you?"

Juliet nodded.

"Seems as though you get more for your money. Was it a grandfather's clock you was looking for?"

"It was one of the old mantel clocks," Juliet said. "But if you have a grandfather's clock, I could tell her about it."

"Come along in, if you want to. You needn't be scared," the girl said. "You and me's the only ones round. Pa and Ma have gone down to the harbor and Blaine's in jail. We got four or five clocks in the place. Pa's crazy about clocks. Every blamed one of 'em goes, too. Come on in, and I'll show you."

There was something Juliet must know about this unsavoury dwelling, so she followed, stumbling over a low step into the dingy hall where the older part of the

house met the ramshackle addition which contained the kitchen.

The girl caught her hand: "Look where you're a stepping, or you'll go head-first into one of them clocks."

Then Juliet saw that one corner of the dark hall held a huge grandfather's clock. It was an old one, but apparently in good repair, for it was ticking.

"Does it really keep time?"

"Sure it does. It's never stopped. Keeps good time, too."

Juliet looked up at it and then held out her hand toward the light from the doorway, so that she could read her own wrist watch. "Oh, you keep standard time!"

"What's standard time? We keep reg'lar time. Same as the sun keeps."

"My watch is set for daylight saving," Juliet said, almost apologetically, to her own amusement.

The girl laughed. "My mercy! Who wants to save daylight. We never. We always keeps the same time going in this house. The other clocks is the same. The best one's in the front room."

The kitchen was a dirty, slovenly mess, worse than the hall, or anything Juliet had seen or imagined. It seemed impossible that one could step from clean air and sunlight into anything so cluttered and smelly, especially in Maine where the standard of cleanliness is high. There were two clocks in the kitchen. One was a wall clock, such as the Scots call a "wag-at-the-wa'," with a big clock face, a wreath of roses in the centre, a pendulum, and weights hung by a long brass chain. It was over what had once been a noble old fire-place, but was now just a dark hole which embraced a cook stove. The other was a little rosewood clock, with a bird flying in the blue banded centre of the clock door.

It stood on the mantel. It was also going and, both of them, as Juliet quickly noted, were keeping standard time.

Mastering her desire to slide out of the side door and gulp a mouthful of fresh air, Juliet allowed herself to be led past the unopened side door and into the closed "front room." It was stuffy and not very clean, but less crowded and not so odoriferous as the kitchen. The three clocks in this room, one on the mantel, one on a whatnot, and one on a shelf over the battered upright piano, were all ticking and they were all newer in style than those in the kitchen. One of the clocks the girl declared was a "gold clock, a wedding present to my brother." The other was a dark metal and the last one on the shelf was of slightly chipped china.

Juliet looked twice at the china clock and tried to keep back anything that would indicate her surprise. It was the exact replica of the one in the Drake morning room, save for the chipping of one of the cherubs who held up the clock face. It was evidently of the same expensive china and distinctly out of place in this down-at-the-heels farmhouse.

"That's a good clock!"

"Yeh! It had ought to be. It was Miz' Drake's, but she got kinda mad when it was let fall by one of the maids and chipped. Lon True he got it off'n her and gave it to Jenny. He was always giving Jenny things from Drakes'."

"Well, if my friend bought at all," Juliet assured her, carefully refraining from using Jenny's name and anxious to get out into the air again, "it would be one of those I saw in the kitchen. They are the oldest and my friend wants something old."

"They're old all right," the girl agreed, "but they don't make any hit with me on that account. I think they're awful-looking, don't you?"

Juliet shook her head, smiling: "You put a price on those on the mantelpiece and I'll ask her."

But that, Juliet discovered, was not the way sales were made in the country. Such a thing as putting a definite price on an article was beyond the power of this girl. Bargains were not made that way. It was customary for both parties to stand around the article for some time, the one decrying, the other praising, and then the buyer must make some offer to form a basis for bargaining. Such a thing as saying the thing is worth so and so, and standing on that, was unknown.

"Let's go out and talk it over," Juliet suggested, so oppressed by the air that her head ached.

The girl agreed, reluctantly. The foul air did not bother her in the least. She stood pleating a bit of her soiled rubber apron which had once been gay with flowers, but now was grimy and discoloured.

"'Tain't really mine," she finally blurted out, "and I don't know whether Ma and Pa would be willing to sell it. But you make 'n offer, and I'll ask them."

Suddenly Juliet felt as though she must get away from this place. This girl could give her no more information, and she must get away before Bet guessed the significance of what she had given.

"Three dollars is all I can offer just now, but I'll see my friend, and drop down this way in a day or so."

She hurriedly started her car.

Rod, coming back with the empty truck, saw her go and turned to look at Harvey Oram who had asked for a "lift" back. "Now what the Harry's she in such a hurry for?"

Harvey shook his head. "If she gets anything out of the Weavers it's more'n anyone here has been able to. They're said to be dumb. Well, 'taint any skin off my nose, but Blaine ain't so dumb. Though there's

something allfired mean about him, and kind of wicked too."

"That little redhead ain't got any fear into her, at all, has she?" Harvey continued with evident admiration. "Butting into everybody's affairs. And she dun't look a mite downcast, even though Tony Drake's likely to be jailed."

Juliet filled her eyes with the beauty of the day, the road, and the thought that she was going toward something at once interesting and exciting, at the county seat. She must hurry, though, or Manning might leave her out of his calculations, this morning, and that would never do.

Her purse was lying beside her on the seat. She immediately began to wonder if she had indeed put the letters in the purse. She stopped the car to look and satisfy herself. Yes. They were there. She thrust them back with a little laugh at her own excitement and nervousness. She must find a safe place for them. She did not think the time for publishing them had yet come.

A slight noise, a rustle, something disturbed the silence. Instinctively, and before her eye caught what she thought was a moving human figure in the brush at the side of the road, Juliet started the car and, in starting it, deliberately swerved to the other, and wrong side of the road.

It was a fortunate move for, as the car swerved, a stone missed the windshield by less than an inch. Juliet did not stop to look for the hand that had thrown the stone. She put on all speed and went flying down the road toward the next hamlet.

She had seen, in the mirror, a man crawl out of the ditch and disappear into the woods on the other side of the road. He had evidently calculated that he would be too far away to be seen plainly, but Juliet had a

keen eye and the man's carriage she thought unmistakable.

She felt sure, moreover, that there was a car hidden in the woods. She must make good time or he might intercept her before she reached the next village.

She reached it and went warily through it. There were several bridges, over river and inlets, to cross before she reached the county seat. There were short cuts that he might use. She must keep her wits about her, and she must not ride home alone. It seemed absurd to be so wary, so cautious on this quiet road, on this gorgeous day, nevertheless, Juliet went hurrying along with quick glances up and down at every cross-road. Somebody so evidently wanted those letters.

In the county attorney's office Manning, and Clarges, the handwriting expert, waited for Juliet. They were disputing as Juliet came in.

"You are quite sure about the husband's handwriting?" the county attorney had just asked irritably. He had been disappointed and he was annoyed. Clarges declared that the letters sent to Mrs. Codey, supposedly from Jenny in Boston, were not written by Tony Drake, but traced by Blaine Weaver over a writing in another hand, which was not Tony's.

Manning turned impatiently. He had been so absorbed he had not heard Juliet knock. She seemed breathless, her colour was high and her eyes were bright. Juliet had had an exciting race from the last bridge, but she was not sure that she would tell the county attorney.

Manning introduced her to Orrin Clarges. He was a suave, plump, dark man who looked like a foreigner, though he was a native of Maine. He was immediately absorbed in the precious notes which Juliet placed before him. He begged leave to retire to the inner

office to compare the letters with those in Manning's possession.

When he had gone Juliet asked Manning if his programme had changed. He shook his head. Clarges had, he admitted, upset one of his conclusions and might, with Juliet's letters, upset more. He must wait until he had the full report.

Clarges came back into the room. His face was flushed with excitement. Could he have these originals to-night to make a thorough and careful examination and accurate copies? Would Mrs. Jackson consent?

Juliet hesitated. It might be a ruse on the part of the prosecution to get possession of the letters. She looked at the county attorney thoughtfully.

"Mrs. Jackson," Manning said earnestly, "if you are working for the truth, then the truth belongs to the state as well as the defence. If you want to prevent my making a mistake, let me have these notes now, and don't publish them yet."

Juliet considered, her eyes on him, and then, with a sudden movement pushed the disputed notes toward the expert: "Take them. They will be safer with you, anyway, than with me." She smiled at the expert. "Be very careful for I have an idea I was followed, for the letters, to-day."

The county attorney looked his question, but Juliet shook her head. "Not until I am sure it was not simply a product of my own imagination."

She turned to the expert: "You'll take great care of them and of the copies for, even if we hold them until the trial, my paper prints them first."

"Trust me. I will be seen leaving this place with this portfolio, but the letters will remain in the safe in this room, for I mean to come back after luncheon and work all day and after dinner; maybe to-morrow morning."

Juliet watched him look at the letters again under a

magnifying glass, before he put them in the safe, without asking any questions. She beckoned to Manning and they walked toward the windows looking down the street.

"Mr. Manning, could you ride home with me this afternoon, and stay for a play that the Outdoor Theatre is giving to-night?"

Manning frowned. "I'm very busy, Mrs. Jackson—"

"This is important," Juliet interrupted. "Very important. In fact, unless you consent I shall have to telephone Mr. Davis to come here and take me home and I'd rather not. He's acting as watch dog at the Drake place, you see."

Manning frowned again. "I'd like to know just exactly what you are driving at."

"Just exactly what I am asking. I have a feeling that I was watched coming to this office, and that I may be followed home. Now it may be that I imagine it, and——"

"Why the play?"

"Porter Hallay will be there. He has been hired to fetch and carry the props for these people, and I want him to see us both there, and to think the studio, the letters, and Julian are unguarded."

CHAPTER VIII

"'NOTHER gra' big gi-unt!" Julian exclaimed solemnly, when the tall county attorney appeared at Marian's studio.

Juliet, who realized the flood of questions that were slowly forming under the red-brown thatch and behind the blue eyes, felt nervous. She had this man eating out of her hand. He had introduced her, this noon, to the county detective and most of the other officials interested in the case, and driven her home, in his own car, while a detective brought her car back to Lost.

What might not that young child do to the case if he spoke. How much had he overheard? She had tried to keep all allusions to the murder out of the conversation at the studio, but just a little must have crept in. That little might be enough to be embarrassing, if Julian retailed it.

"Is he bigger'n Bildavis?"

Juliet felt the eyes of the county attorney on her. "I think about the same."

Julian seized his hand and swung on it. "I bet you that I could have a circus 'f I had the bofe of you together. I'd charge two pins and call you Jack'n the Beanstalk's gi-unt and Bildavis his brother."

"I am six feet two."

"Good Golly!" Julian was beside himself with joy. "I got friends that is the two biggest men in the whole world. Mums could be a dwarf." Instantly he flew to his mother and patted her. "A b'utiful dwarf or a fairy. You could choose, and Nurse Mary could be a witch and I could be a monkey. Oh, come and live with

us, Mister. I could charge more if you wrastled with Bildavis."

"Julian," said his mother, reproachfully. "I hardly think that's a nice way to talk. Mr. Davis said you might call him 'Uncle Bill.'"

"Yeh, but he doesn't care much for it and neever do I. 'This Uncle bizness gets me nowhere', he said to me. 'Call me anything you dum please. You are your mother's son and I suppose I'll have to put up with it.'"

"Julian!"

"That's what he said," Julian insisted, and then, seeing Manning laugh, added, greatly encouraged: "Jane Stover don't like Bildavis. When Bildavis tried to find out where Tony was that day he was losted, she said: 'How dare you think I would help him run away! How dare you! How dare you!' and then she cried."

"Hush, Jule!" begged his mother, greatly concerned. She had not mentioned the fact of Tony's disappearance yet to Manning. Moreover, he knew Jane Stover. How well, she did not know.

He smiled at her over her small son's head. "Don't stop him. This is going to be a profitable visit for me."

"I meant to tell you about it in my own good time, but we're not publishing it abroad, unless you make it necessary."

Later, while Julian slept in his arms, she gave him a brief outline of the story. Julian had clung to the county attorney who would not give him up. He said he liked holding him. Juliet was delighted. If he felt Julian's charm, he would be willing to take pains to guard her darling.

Juliet stole a look at him as he bent over the boy and arranged his little legs so that he might be more comfortable. A nice fellow, but a bachelor or she was much

mistaken. Something about the awkward way he held the boy made Juliet sure he had none of his own. He admitted it a few moments later when Nurse Mary came for Julian.

"I shun kids, as a rule, but I must say this one of yours gets me."

Nurse Mary sniffed. Was Miz' Jackson, whom Nurse Mary loved next to her charge, but was jealous of every prospective step-father, going to add him to her string? Wasn't Mr. Davis, poor, long-suffering man, enough? And did Miz' Jackson know that this lawyer was "crazy about" Miss Jane Stover, as everybody in Lost Harbor knew?

Manning stayed and met Marian, who was very gracious. He agreed to go to the play, although it might prejudice him in the eyes of some of his Lost Harbor clients. When Bill Davis came in, he was outwardly cordial, though the two men measured each other with their eyes. Marian, who, to her regret, was to dine out and go on to the performance with some friends, left them reluctantly.

Twice, during dinner, Julian had to be captured and sent back to bed. That he should be expected to sleep while the house held two giants seemed to him preposterous. He protested against it with all his might, but in the end his mother and sleep prevailed.

Juliet discussed with the attorney how much of what they knew he wanted spread abroad at this time, and was shrewd enough to see that Manning was giving her just a little more than the others, because she had found the three notes. She felt sure she might get even more if Bill were not there.

Manning was fully aware that his conduct of the case would make him known, and criticized, throughout his state, possibly throughout the United States. Juliet used that as an argument in asking him not to

make an arrest now. She did more than ask, she warned him to go slow.

"Give me time and I'll show you why, in spite of the fact that the crime is three years old, in spite of the fact that everything you unearth points to Tony Drake as the unscrupulous, wealthy young degenerate, which I am sure he is not."

"Yes, and you are not absolutely sure either that he's innocent," the shrewd young lawyer told her.

Juliet stole a look at Bill before she replied. She saw Bill's mouth tighten and knew that to-night Bill's impulse was to fly bull-headed at anyone who threw doubt on the case and the boy he championed. Well, he would have to be shown, sooner or later, that she could not allow her feelings to influence her work, so she faced both men a little warily and said: "I have a very strong feeling that Tony Drake had nothing to do with the murder of Jenny Weaver. I am not so sure that he does not know or, at least, has a very shrewd suspicion as to who did it, and why."

Bill started to rise from his chair. Juliet put her hand out and grasped his arm: "Keep still. Sit where you are and listen. Why he goes in terror of True, I don't know, but——"

"I do," interrupted Manning. "It's because Weaver and Tony Drake have bribed True to keep quiet."

"You're wrong! You're wrong to couple Tony with Weaver!" Juliet persisted, her eyes shining. "I feel it. Give me time——"

"Time!" interrupted the county attorney. "You'd need a lifetime, and then I doubt if you could do it, and the state expects me to act with such speed as in me lies." He glanced again at the small indomitable creature who looked at him through a cloud of rusty red curls and involuntarily his voice softened. "It can't be done, Mrs. Jackson, everybody has to make

one mistake, at least. I think this case is going to be—your first."

"I've made dozens," Juliet told him, "but this might be *your* first, Mr. Manning, if you're not careful. Mind, I don't say it is, but it might be. Give me forty-eight hours before you move?"

He shook his head. "Can't do it. All set for tomorrow morning."

Juliet sighed. "All right. What will be, will be, and at least, I know I'm working with a man who won't hesitate to do the big thing, if he finds he's wrong."

Manning looked down at the little woman sunk in the big chair and smiled. "If you mean, am I big enough to admit I'm wrong, when it's pointed out to me, why I don't know, Mrs. Jackson. I think I'll make as wry a face and do my back-stepping with as evil a grace as any other honest man. But I do want the right man, not just a conviction. This is my native state and my native town and who ever did Jenny Weaver in is a bloody-minded man, who won't stop at one crime, if he finds himself successful in evading the law. We both know that the law sometimes makes mistakes and all we can do is to study with an open mind the facts and move on them. I will back away from Tony Drake any day you show me evidence, facts, not theories, which clear him, in spite of the fact that he was with Jenny Weaver the last night she was seen alive, and they were quarrelling so that they could be heard."

"What about?" Juliet was on her feet. "For Heaven's sake, tell me *what* they were quarrelling about."

The attorney shook his head. "That's got to be investigated and substantiated, before I bring it into court. I can't see anything for me to do but go ahead, Mrs. Jackson, with Facts v. Intuition. The question is," he said slyly, "will *you* admit you're wrong, if you

are? You see, the working of the country criminal mind is far more sly and clever than a city man or woman would like to admit."

"I am willing to admit I am wrong when I'm *proved* wrong and, in any case, we ought to be moving toward this play."

Manning rose. "What's that?" he asked.

Bill Davis rose to his feet. Again came the sound that had startled them all. The sound of flying footsteps on the path outside, hurrying around the house to the rear. They were sitting in Marian's studio without lights, save the open fire and the soft glow of the rising moon. The ground sloped sharply at the back and it was just possible for a very tall man to look into the large unscreened studio window that had been so placed that one could see far out over the harbor. The window was open.

As they sat silent, listening, frantic fingers clutched at the window sill. Bill Davis would have moved, but both Juliet and Manning motioned to him to be quiet and stay where he was, in the shadow.

Again the fingers clutched and this time found the sill. They clung to it, straining, and there came into view the flushed face and brilliant eyes of Porter Hallay. He rapped on the window sill with one hand and clung with the other, his hand slipped and he disappeared from view with a muttered curse, and then appeared again.

"Miz' Jackson," he called in a low voice, not seeing, in the dimly lighted room, Manning or Bill, for Juliet had stepped forward near the window, while they had drawn back into the shadows. "Miz' Jackson, you've got to give me them letters you took off Rhody. I've got to have them, Miz' Jackson." He clung for a moment desperately trying to make out through the shadow just who was in the room, but with only the fire-light, it was difficult.

Manning slipped from behind Bill and, as once more the straining fingers appeared on the window sill, he grabbed one hand and motioned to Bill to take the other. "Come right in, Porter. Swing him up and in, Mr. Davis, when I do."

The straining and sullenly resisting man came over the sill and through the open window and landed in the room, firmly held by the two men.

"Now you can explain to us, at your ease, Porter, just who wants those letters and why."

Juliet watched the scared look in Porter's queer, tense eyes flicker up, and then die out. He smiled at them all, but addressed her directly: "Didn't mean to frighten you, Miz' Jackson. Just thought I'd look in and see if you was to home, before I rung the bell. Didn't want to waken the kid up if you was all out." He stood in the bright light, for Bill had turned on the lights now, his quick glance darting from one face to the other. He seemed to appeal to her as though he trusted her to get him out of this. It was clever, Juliet admitted, but, at the same time, she grimly determined that it would not avail him. Porter would have to wriggle out of this situation without her help.

"It was a very silly thing to do. If these men had not been here, I might have shot you."

He looked startled, and then tried to laugh. "You don't mean that, Ma'am! It ain't so late as all that."

"It isn't the lateness, it's the way you did it," Juliet told him tersely. "No man peeps in my windows with impunity."

"Come, Porter," County Attorney Manning rapped out sharply, "stop stalling and tell me what brought you here."

Porter shot a quick look at Bill and Juliet, avoiding Manning's eye. His eyes pleaded with Juliet to help him get away from these men and let him see her alone,

but Juliet was through with Porter. She had seen his face when he looked at Julian.

Manning's voice broke through her thoughts. "Come across, Porter. No more time to waste."

"Don't know as Miz' Jackson would like me to tell before you."

"Anything you have to tell me you can tell here and now. Mr. Manning has heard everything I know." She blessed the intuition that had made her visit Manning's office and show him the letters.

"Well, if you want to set there and let them hear it, I ain't going to do any more. Lon True says you have got to give back those letters you bought off of Rhody Codey. He says you ain't any right to them. They belong, if they belong to anybody, in that man's hands," and he pointed to Manning.

Juliet could see his eyes gleam. He was sure that he had put her in a tight place, and that now he could escape, while she tried to explain.

"Mrs. Jackson brought the notes to me. You can go back and tell Lon True that, after you have told me why you told him Mrs. Jackson had these letters."

"Had to," said Porter disconcerted. "Lon ain't one to let go of a thing if he wants it."

"That's true," agreed Manning, "but why the haste and why are you here?"

"Rhody's down town and it isn't safe for Tony. She's got a grudge agin him. I was told to get the letters and get back and——"

"You knew Miss Marian was out," declared Bill Davis, suddenly and harshly, "and you thought you could scare Mrs. Jackson into giving you the letters."

"Unless I found the house empty," answered Porter brusquely, evidently deciding that he might as well hang for a sheep as a lamb. "If she was out what was there to hinder me taking them out of that bewry

drawer, where I saw her put them when she paid for them?"

"How could you see that?" asked Juliet. "I paid Rhody at the door."

"Yeah, but I was round at the back here, looking in, and I seen you take the money from the purse what you had with you all along, and I knew how scart you was. Them letters was mine, anyway. I found them. Rhody had no business to take and sell what was mine."

"Where did *you* find them?" Manning asked.

"In Jenny's pocket."

"Pocket of what?"

"Her apern," Porter snapped. "It was an apern belonged to my Ma, a kind of fancy apern she had bought at an apern and cake sale in the church. Jenny was waiting on table at the boarding house and her Ma hadn't washed for her that week, and Jenny had used all her clean aperns, so Ma loaned her this one. When Jenny went, Ma got her apern back, of course."

"Did the Codeys give it back to her?" Manning asked.

"Nope. I went, myself, to the boarding house and told Miz' Hickey what Ma said about the apern, and she brought it down and give it to me—without looking into the pockets." He nodded to the men. "Without looking into anything. Just reached it out to me, without even wrapping it up or nothing, and I put it in my pocket and took it away. Rhody was the only Codey that knowed about them notes."

There was silence for a moment and Manning rose. "You can run along, Porter. If I catch you loitering about this house, or in any way annoying Mrs. Jackson, I'll land you in gaol."

Then Bill Davis spoke: "And I tell you now, that if I catch you, I'll beat you up before you go to gaol."

Manning saw the quick movement of protest Juliet made and, instead of delivering, as Juliet fully expected, a homily on the folly of beating people up when there were good gaols handy, he merely laughed and said: "With that prospect I feel we may safely assume that Porter will give Mrs. Jackson's premises a wide berth."

"How 'bout the washing then?" asked Porter sullenly. "I gotta get that, haven't I? Can't I come here and get the washing?"

"No!" answered Juliet vehemently. She was surprised at herself, but she did not allow the others to see it. This man was unsafe. He must be kept away from Julian at any price. "I'll make other arrangements, so that Mrs. Codey will get the washing. I am sorry, Porter," she added, Bill Davis thought unnecessarily, "but I can't have you frightening Miss Marian. You should have thought about that when you came here to-night."

"I can't think of everything," said Porter forlornly, "and when Lonny True says go and git it we most generally do around here."

Again Juliet felt that she had been hard on Porter, but she was Julian's mother, and people like Porter must not be allowed to get near enough to harm Julian.

Porter opened his mouth, but the telephone bell interrupted, ringing again and again.

Bill Davis took the receiver from the hook. "What!" he barked. "Say that all over again. I can't believe you!"

"Oh, what is it, Bill?" Juliet begged.

"Jane says Tony was stabbed by Rhody Codey at the Bailey drug store. It's only a slight cut and he's had it tied up." He turned to the phone again. "I'll be down right away. Don't need me? Is it important that

he come to the play, Juliet?" he said, as he turned from the telephone. "He isn't much hurt, but——"

Juliet looked toward Manning. He nodded slightly, quickly, but Juliet saw it. "Yes," she said, definitely. "If he's able to come, I want him and Jane."

Bill gave her message to Jane, then hung up the receiver.

"It seems to me it would be better—"

Juliet interrupted him. "I think it best that he come."

Bill stared at her, and following her eyes saw that Porter had slumped against the wall.

He looked as though he was going to faint. "Rhody! Rhody did that! My Godfreys Almighty! The girl's clean off her base. Nice kettle of fish she's landed us all in."

"She has, indeed," said Manning brusquely. "Get out, Porter, and see what you can do with her."

As Porter hurried away, Bill turned to Juliet. "I don't feel like seeing a play. I don't feel like leaving Julian alone in this house with his nurse."

Juliet put her hand on Bill's sleeve and looked at Manning.

Manning nodded impatiently. "Might as well tell him. I don't think it's coming off now."

"I'm not so sure. Anyway, Bill, you must come as far as the grove with us, so that the town will think we're all out, except Nurse Mary and Julian. The house is, and will be, well guarded."

"I'll stay till the play begins then, and sneak back here," Bill declared, looking reproachfully at Juliet. "I won't leave Julian alone."

Juliet frowned at him. How dare Bill, even for a moment, believe that she would neglect her precious boy. "I told you he would be guarded."

"You bet he will be. I'll be here."

"I'm looking after my child. Do you dare think I'd forget or sacrifice him?"

"No." Bill looked at her sadly. "But when you're hot on the trail, Juliet, you forget him, and—and everybody else."

Juliet was very white as she answered slowly and clearly, resisting her impulse to turn on Bill and tell him to mind his own business and pursue some one else, some woman like Marian, since he so disapproved of her. "I'm made that way, Bill, I can't help it. I don't really forget. I just do all I can to make things safe and then I clear my mind of everything but the business on hand. Come on. After the play begins go back, if you like. I'll be thankful to have you here, but don't talk to me about it now, or when you go. I've got to keep cool."

Manning gave them both a quick glance as they turned toward the door and then said lightly as he followed them: "What Porter would like to do is strangle Rhody. He promised Lon True to keep her away from Tony Drake and to get the letters himself. Now he's lost out, and the fat is in the fire. I'll have to arrest Tony Drake. If I don't the townspeople will tar and feather me."

"Are you going to do just what they want because you're scared of a little tar and feathers? Why, I'll undertake to stop them, single-handed," Bill declared.

Manning laughed, but he put out a friendly hand to the other big man who was so worried, and who was trying to look out for them all, Juliet, Tony, Julian and even Manning himself. "I won't do anything because I'm scared of the speech of people, as my old granddad used to say. But I am afraid, Davis, that if I don't act soon I will be letting the guilty man slip from between my fingers."

"If you mean Tony," Bill's voice rose on a note of

exasperation, "he'll be here whenever you want him."

"I'm not so sure of that."

Juliet, her cloak over her arm, stepped between them. "You are both wrong. Lon True probably staged this stabbing to give Porter time to get the letters. What he didn't bargain for was your presence here and, also, Tony didn't get hurt on schedule time. That telephone message was to have interrupted us ten minutes earlier."

"You know I don't agree with you," began Manning.

"Of course you don't now, but you will later." At the doorway Juliet paused. "Neither of you are to lecture that quivering bunch of fear and nerves called Tony Drake, to-night, please. He's holding on to his self-control by the skin of his teeth. It's hard lines—for Jane."

"I give it up," said Bill, impatiently. "Here's Jane mum and white, refusing to talk! The very sight of her makes me miserable. Here's Tony Drake equally white and mum, letting himself be run by True. He's a queer butler. He acts as though he owned the Drake place and Tony, and Tony submits to it, as meek as a fish and——"

"Fish aren't so awful damn meek. Your metaphors are mixed. Fish may look stupid, but they bite."

"Well, I wish Tony would. If he'd take one good bite out of somebody, there would be more hope for him."

Juliet looked at Manning. "He might, if the law, in the person of Mr. Manning, would hold its hand."

Manning shook his head. "The law's the law. Once started, I can't stop it."

CHAPTER IX

THEY were late. The first play was over when they reached the rocky glen which was the open-air theatre used by the Sylvan Players. The audience, on rugs, cushions and the carpet of pine needles which covered the ground, were re-settling themselves in anticipation of the second one-act play on the programme. Behind the big boulders which formed part of the scenery, at the back of the space which formed the stage, a faint glow came from the dressing tent in the rear.

Juliet walked toward the stage with Manning and Bill. They were followed by Tony, his left arm bandaged, and Jane Stover, who had a queer frightened look in her eyes, as she watched Manning.

It occurred to Juliet that her theatre party was scarcely a success, so far, and she called cheerfully over her shoulder: "The second play's a comedy, I believe. Jane," she added, receiving no response, "I think, if we were by ourselves, we might get a little fun out of it, for it's frightfully pleasant out of doors to-night."

"Except for the heat and the mosquitoes," growled Bill, slapping his arm. "You'd think it was the first of August, not the last. That fellow brought a whole kit of surgeon's tools with him and has just completed a painful operation."

"Well, we can smoke," Juliet assured him cheerfully, and gave his arm a quick squeeze as she lowered her voice and said: "Oh, for Pete's sake, Bill, cheer up!"

Big Bill grasped her hand and slipped it through his

arm, muttering something intensely uncomplimentary concerning rugs, dark nights, slippery pine needles, and open-air theatricals, but Juliet would not stop until they were almost in front of the tiny footlights provided for the stage. "I want to see and be seen," she explained to Manning. "Especially, I want to be seen here with you."

Manning looked at her with suspicion. "I wish I knew how much of a compliment that speech was."

They settled themselves. A strong smell of citronella pervaded the night about them, vying with the scent of the pine needles. Cautious ladies, old and young, here much in the majority, had come prepared to anoint themselves and were doing so, liberally.

Gradually, as their eyes became accustomed to the faint light, they were able to discern certain faces in the crowd about them. Presently the moon would rise above the trees, but until then the footlights and an occasional electric flashlight, as people found their way among the trees, with a few electric bulbs strung here and there above their heads, were all that lightened the darkness in the little grove.

Everywhere friendly voices were calling from one group to the other, for many of these people came year after year, some for their second year at the dramatic school, or their third or fourth year at the various art schools. It was largely a feminine audience for Maine, in the summer-time, has a very large female population. It is a long way from New York and Philadelphia, or even Boston, and many busy fathers, husbands and lovers find it difficult to make a visit every week-end. There were a few children brought there by lonely mothers in desperate search of amusement.

Juliet was aware, when the light from the stage fell upon them and revealed Tony Drake, his arm bandaged, with Manning, that there was a subdued murmur

and some of the small groups deliberately moved out of their immediate vicinity. Juliet could not help hoping that Tony did not notice them. She knew Jane Stover had, because Jane stiffened and moved nearer to Tony, touching the bandaged arm softly. Tony had vouchsafed very little information as to Rhody's sudden assault. He had told Manning dryly that it was only a surface cut, and that he didn't want anything done to "the crazy kid."

To the audience Juliet paid very little attention. Her gaze, for the most part, was fixed on the space between two high rocks which seemed to be the stage entrance for the players. She was wondering if the stage was completely set, or if chance would give them a sight of the property man, Porter Hallay, for, as yet, no one had crossed the dimly lighted spot that represented the stage. Was it possible that she had been entirely wrong in her diagnosis and that Porter, frightened by what had occurred earlier in the evening, would not appear.

Unexpectedly, from the audience, came Juliet's reassurance. Rhody Codey, the last person one expected to see at a so called "high brow" entertainment, came down what constituted the centre aisle, escorted by Porter.

"Nobody to be gaoled for to-night's little accident, I see," Juliet whispered to Bill.

"Tony wouldn't hear of it," Bill answered.

"Wasn't it, strictly speaking, Manning's idea?"

"No. Tony was pretty firm about it. Said it wasn't the girl's fault. Said people stuffed her full of lies and she hadn't brains enough to reason things out herself."

Juliet watched Porter's quick look about, which included them, she knew, although there was no recognition in his eyes. There was, however, a gleam, a gleam that grew to a spark, an angry spark, as he

leaned over toward Rhody, spoke fast and vehemently, and then left her hastily.

Juliet spoke to Manning. "See that?"

"Don't worry."

Juliet, leaning nearer, indicated a dark figure at the stage entrance. "He's coming out now, to make sure of us and, incidentally, establish an alibi."

"He came to bring that chair."

"Watch!"

Another dark figure, the stage manager, appeared and, in no uncertain tone, wanted to know why in hell Porter found himself on that stage and with that chair.

Porter explained, in deeply wounded tones, that he wanted to stand on it to fix an electric light in a nearby tree.

His explanation was treated with coldness and threats of discharge, and suddenly the lights went out. The audience became very still. As suddenly the footlights came on again with renewed strength and the play began.

It failed to interest Juliet. She missed the first few words, because Bill gave her arm a little pat and promptly and noiselessly, for so large a man, disappeared into the gloom of the trees behind the audience.

After wondering for awhile why anyone with such jointed-doll knees should have adopted the theatre and dancing as a profession, and a vague feeling that the grafting of the teacher's English accent on an untamed middle-western voice was a little unfortunate, Juliet promptly forgot stage and scene. She began acting out in her own mind the real drama in which she held a minor part. She glanced back into the dark behind her where Jane and Tony sat together, and wondered whether it would end as a tragedy for them. Do what she could to prevent it, fate seemed to be so shaping it.

Oblivious of time, Juliet drifted out on a sea of speculation as to the next move to be made in the curious game of chance which the three year old mystery had become.

There was prolonged and rapturous applause and, with a start, Juliet realized the play was over. The players came out, looking pale and ghastly in the queer light, to acknowledge the applause.

A man came out of the gloom behind them and touched Manning on the arm.

Manning rose and left them, without explanation, but just before the signal for the next and last play was given Manning's hand closed on Juliet's arm: "Come back with me, at once," he whispered.

Quietly Juliet rose and, as quietly guided by Manning's hand, she stepped behind the seated audience and went along the pine-carpeted path. The actors had begun to speak and there was double enchantment in their voices and the subdued light at this distance.

"Just a little further," said Manning. "We don't want them to hear our voices, or what we have to say."

"What's happened?" said Juliet, with a sudden tightening at her throat.

"Everything's all right," Manning assured her. "We were in time."

"Then I was right?"

By this time the stage and audience were far enough away to prevent their being heard, and quite out of sight.

Along the road that led to the glen and the many broad paths that led through the woods and between the cottages, cars were parked for, owing to the rocky ground, there was always difficulty in finding parking space on Sunset Hill.

Juliet could see, at an angle in the road, three men

standing close together. As they came up to them Manning's electric torch flashed on the face of the man in the centre of the group. It was Porter! His hands were tied and he was held by the other two men.

"Caught him in the studio ransacking your desk," Manning told her. "He told these men that he had your permission to look for some letters."

Juliet had a sudden impulse to spring at him, as she thought of Julian.

As though he read her thoughts, Manning spoke. "While he was ransacking the desk his helper had your boy rolled up in a blanket and was handing him through the window to a third party."

"Julian!" breathed Juliet, and felt a fury of anger against the whole world. "Have they hurt Julian?" She took an impulsive step toward the prisoner.

"Safe, Mrs. Jackson," one of the men said, "not a hair of his little head touched, neither. When them bums saw Mr. Davis was between them and a get-away, they laid the boy down on the front steps. He was fast asleep and he stayed so, but we hadda send them two bums to the hospital in Augusta."

"Miz' Jackson," said Porter, suddenly, in his most persuasively innocent tones, "I had nothing to do with that. I only went after them letters, which you know belong to me. Rhody had no business to sell them to you, and you know it. You told me——"

Juliet turned to Manning. "He tried to kidnap Tony. He sent the stone through the windshield of my car. Those letters must be important. They meant to hold Julian until I gave them up."

"It ain't only me, Miz' Jackson!" There was something about the way he said it that made both Manning and Juliet feel he was telling the truth. Instantly Juliet's hold on Manning's arm tightened. To speak now would be fatal. To act as though they did not

believe him, did not care to listen to him, might provoke him to further revelations.

Juliet pressed her fingers into Manning's arm to keep him silent and drew him aside.

"What is it?" he whispered to her as they walked apart.

"Leave him alone and he'll tell. Begin to talk to me now about something else."

Manning opened his mouth to speak, but the sentence he had formed never left his lips nor was Juliet ever to hear it for, at that moment, a man came crashing out of the end of the little wood across the road from them and away from the grove where the play was going on. He threw himself upon Porter, thrusting the two officers aside. "You hound," he snarled. "You would, would you? The moment my back was turned!"

"Be quick," Juliet whispered to Manning, and moved forward. "It's a ruse to set Porter free. Don't be fooled."

Manning bounded forward. He seized the man by the throat and, despite his struggles, held him, and called to the two officers to watch Porter. Juliet ran up to them just as they secured Porter. "Hold him," she said vehemently. "Don't let him slip through your hands."

As she spoke the man with whom Manning had been struggling ceased his efforts, looked up at them and said in apparent surprise: "Why, it's Mrs. Jackson, and Mr. Manning."

Manning's dignity was slightly ruffled by the tussle he had been compelled to take part in. "Yes, and now, maybe, True, you will explain what this means?"

True moved nearer Manning, intentionally or unintentionally, separating him from the other men. It was a trick which Manning apparently did not see, but Juliet did.

"Watch him," she called. "Whatever his explanation. As for you," she continued, turning to Porter, "up with your hands!"

Involuntarily, Porter backed away from between the two men, a movement that would have undoubtedly seemed natural, and would have succeeded, if Juliet's warning to Manning had not already put the officers on the alert.

Juliet had something in her own hand that gleamed as she lifted it. Porter, with a muffled protest and mumbling something about not needing a woman with a pistol to make him side with the law, reluctantly lifted his hand. "You see," Juliet said lightly, as she moved so that she stood between True and the wood, "the rope's cut."

Manning, still with his hand on True's arm, ordered the officers to put handcuffs on Porter and take him to his office in the courthouse. They led him toward their own car. Porter broke out into loud protests, but Manning scarcely bothered with him. "Lock him up till I get there, if he's a nuisance," was his advice. He made his way toward the car in which True had come, dragging True with him.

The others out of the way, Manning stopped: "Now, True, I'll listen."

"I must apologize," True said, turning to them, "but my feelings, my indignation, got the better of me. When I heard how that dastardly fellow had attempted to touch little Julian, whom we all think so much of, Mrs. Jackson, I just could not keep my hands to myself. I felt I must get hold of him."

It was Manning's eyes that signalled caution now, but he need not have feared. "Thank you, Mr. True," Juliet said, in a voice that made Manning relax. It was so soft and silky that he, as well as True, was surprised. "It was splendid of you to feel that way,

but a little unwise, don't you think, to act as you did?"

"I know, Ma'am," True began, "but you see, I didn't know Porter was in good hands. I thought he was standing there arguing things out, bargaining about how much he'd tell, was what I really thought. You see, I didn't realize that it was you and Mr. Manning. I thought, when I first burst out of those woods that it was Mr. Tony and Miss Jane."

"Oh, did you?" Juliet's voice was still silky, but for some reason or other, Manning's grasp on True tightened.

True continued with dignity: "I wasn't prepared for your being so well informed, Ma'am, so aware of the situation, you might say."

"No," said Juliet, quietly. "Nor for my being armed, True."

"No, Ma'am, precisely. I thought there was danger of Porter getting away, and I knew I could prevent that."

"I see," said Juliet, still softly, "and that was why you cut the rope that bound his hands. To give him a chance to fight for himself, I suppose, and prevent his being severely mauled while helpless."

"Well, you see, Ma'am," began True, with a quick shifting glance about.

"Shut up," growled Manning, "and come along with me. We'll take True's car, Mrs. Jackson. I'll have you and your handy little pistol on the back seat. We are going to have a cosy half-hour together in my office. There are several things I want to know."

"Mr. Tony, sir," protested True. "I'd like to tell him that I won't be home when he returns. He rather depends on me."

"Oh yes," Manning said, urging him toward the car. "We all know that, True, and how well you look

after him, but, for once, Mr. Davis will attend to Tony Drake. Neither of them will mind when they know where you are. I'll telephone from the office, if necessary."

"Just as you like," True said, resignedly. "I'd rather not have Mr. Tony know. It will simply agitate him and, though he makes light of it, he lost quite a lot of blood to-night."

"In with you. I have no more time to waste. Climb in first, Mrs. Jackson, and keep awake."

"No fear," Juliet told him, and they could see the metallic gleam of the weapon in her hand.

"You make a mistake, sir, and you too, Mrs. Jackson. You class me with Porter."

"No such mistake is being made," Juliet told him, as she settled herself directly behind him and leaned forward so that he felt, for a moment, cold steel against his neck, "to my mind you are far more dangerous."

CHAPTER X

TRUE stood motionless, in Manning's office, the white glare of an unshaded electric light bulb full on his face. His eyes were fixed on Porter, and that relentless gaze seemed to Juliet to put greater fear into Porter than anything the county attorney said. The sweat stood out on his forehead, but Manning was gaining very little information. Porter admitted that he had entered Mrs. Jackson's house to try to get his letters back. That was all he would admit, adding, sullenly, that the letters were his, anyway, and Rhody had no business to sell them.

Finally Manning sent him away with the officers, and spoke to Juliet, as though he had forgotten True's presence. "Shall I hold him, Mrs. Jackson, for forcible entry, or shall I let him go?"

Juliet paused, although her mind was made up. She wanted to see if True would speak.

"Mrs. Jackson. If I may——"

Juliet inclined her head and True began in his measured voice: "If you could bring yourself to overlook this, Mrs. Jackson. Porter's really only a boy, and not a bad boy, either. I have known him ever since he was a child, and there's no real harm in him. He just got it into his silly head that those letters might drag Mr. Tony deeper into this Weaver Case, lost his common sense, and went after them. He didn't really mean any harm to anybody. I'm sure of that."

Juliet still said nothing, but appeared to be debating the question.

Manning glanced at her and waited.

Finally she looked up and said coldly: "I don't agree with you, True. I think Porter sufficiently dangerous to want him gaoled."

"Mrs. Jackson! Don't put a prison blot on the boy."

"Imprisonment is hardly a strange or new experience for our friend, Porter. How about the six months he spent in Thomaston gaol?"

She saw True's start when she mentioned Thomaston, and Manning regarded her with open surprise. She hoped Manning would keep quiet. She wanted to hear what True had to say.

"I didn't know——"

"That I knew it. Well, I do, True, and several other things that are not so boyishly innocent." Juliet blessed the report on Porter's past that she had secured for her paper. "Tell me the real reason why you want him released. It is just possible I might consider that."

True looked at the woman. Dull, cold hatred was in his heart, but not for a moment dare he show that. He must not give her an inch of real information. She was the kind that would follow any lead. "I don't want him held, Mrs. Jackson, because of Mr. Tony."

Juliet was saying to herself: "The fox! He thinks he can throw me off the scent. I must not believe anything he tells me."

"Mr. Tony!" she exclaimed aloud, looking at True in apparent amazement. "Come, True, you said that before. What can Porter have to say about Mr. Tony Drake that we do not already know?"

She looked at the man, her eyes full of wonder, her lips parted in astonishment. It was impossible for True to think her otherwise than genuinely amazed at the idea. This being what he was working for True, with a quick glance at Mr. Manning, said: "I don't think I ought to say any more, Ma'am, before a witness."

"I think you'll have to, True. I'm not employed by

the Drakes to watch over Mr. Tony. He takes his chance with me exactly as everybody else does. I am not Mr. Tony Drake's private detective, nor his attorney, so it is quite immaterial to me what you say before the prosecution. Only be brief."

She leaned back and surveyed True with interest, but none of the anxiety he had evidently expected. It was annoying. True now knew that he must give them something to work on, but what? Quickly he thought of the most plausible and, at the same time, most harmless plan. "Porter does know something that might either reflect on, or clear, Mr. Tony——"

"Be careful what you say, True," warned Manning.

Juliet could have blessed him for his intervention. It switched True's attention, and made him less cautious in framing his lie, for lie Juliet expected and believed it to be.

True stared at Manning and wet his lips with the end of his tongue. The prosecutor must not keep Porter in his clutches now. He might learn too much. True thought hurriedly that if they were given something that looked worth while they might let Porter go, but it must be the truth. How much of the truth could he part with now? Then, realizing that to stand there irresolute would give an impression far worse for Porter and himself than anything he could say, he again spoke deliberately, but with a certain sense of perturbation: "This is something I'd expect you both to consider confidential, as far as my part in it goes. Porter told me he saw Jenny—late that night, after her husband left her."

Manning leaned forward. "That so, True? Actually so? It would be damned interesting to me if it was."

True glanced at Juliet who had taken out her vanity case and was thoughtfully powdering the end of her little nose.

"Absolutely, sir, I assure you."

Still Juliet did not look at him. What in God's name did the woman want!

"And if you gaol him now, sir, I won't be able to get from him whether she was alone or not. He will shut up. You'll see you won't get a word out of him."

"I think better of the power of the law than that," said the county attorney shortly. "Shall we have him in and try?"

Juliet shook her head. "Not before True has an opportunity to tell us more." She had observed the agitation, apparent or pretended, into which this suggestion had thrown the Drakes' butler.

"Oh, for God's sake, sir," he said, appealing to the county attorney. "Don't let there be any fooling about this. Once you get Porter suspicious the fat's in the fire, and there won't be any getting at the truth in this case."

"Which is?" the county attorney asked him.

"Which is that—" he stopped suddenly. "Which is what I can't tell you yet, because——"

Juliet rose, with a little contemptuous laugh, and started toward the door.

True called to her: "Wait, Ma'am, wait! Give Porter his freedom now, and you'll thank me the day of the trial."

Juliet laughed. "I don't believe you. I don't believe you mean to tell us what you know. Porter is as essential to you, or your side, whatever that is, as you seem to think he is to us. In the meantime, I'd feel much safer and better able to conduct my search if he was kept in gaol. So, Mr. Manning, I make complaint that one Porter Hallay did enter my house to-night with intent to take and carry away certain letters which are my legal property; that he did take away, before he was apprehended, copies of said letters which I had

caused to be placed in my safe and that, during the brief scuffle which we witnessed, when our friend, True, here so kindly came to our assistance and cut his bonds, these letters, or rather the copies of these letters, were passed by Porter to True."

Instantly True moved toward the door, but Manning, first pressing the electric button on his desk, was there blocking his way.

"Mr. Manning, I haven't got those letters. I swear I haven't."

"No, Mr. Manning, he hasn't the letters, for the simple reason that he put them under the cushion of the front seat of his car."

True's face was white as he asked: "Do you believe I put them there, Mr. Manning? If they are there?"

"I really couldn't say, True, but we'll look Porter and the letters up and make sure."

One of the "specials" who had been guarding Porter entered, and Manning instructed him to get the copies and bring them to him.

"Careless of you to let Porter do the job, True," Juliet observed, as the officer closed the door.

"I don't understand you, Mrs. Jackson."

"No? But it was careless of you, True. Or did it suit you to get rid of the too impetuous Porter just at this time?"

"Mrs. Jackson, every word you say is just a puzzle to me. I'm trying to do my best for Mr. Tony with his mother and step-father gone. What else could I want?"

"I don't know. I'm just as much in the dark as you want me to be, but maybe this will be a lesson to you."

"Mrs. Jackson! Mr. Manning! Am I to be locked up?"

"I don't think so," said Manning easily, "but you've

been a little indiscreet. Best walk warily and, better yet, tell what you know."

"Mrs. Jackson, let me explain."

"I haven't time for any more lies. Lies won't help Mr. Tony Drake, if you are really trying to help him."

True walked toward her, but Juliet shook her head. "Any explanation you have to make, True, will have to be made to Mr. Manning alone." She glanced at Manning, who nodded toward the inner office door.

Juliet went toward it, opened it, and was greeted by Clarges.

His portfolio was open on the desk and the three letters spread out. As Juliet went toward the desk, Clarges drew her attention to them, with a wave of his hand: "There they are, Mrs. Jackson and, instead of helping us out, it looks as though they would hopelessly muddle things. One of the notes supplied by you was apparently written by Blaine Weaver, one by Tony Drake, but the third is a puzzle, as yet."

"The one signed 'Tony' is undoubtedly in Anthony Drake's handwriting?"

Clarges nodded, and Juliet went on eagerly: "Then I am to understand that the first note is in Blaine Weaver's handwriting, but the one signed 'L' you can't identify yet. Have you compared it with the specimen of True's handwriting given you?"

Clarges nodded. "Yes, but it is not similar."

Juliet drew a long breath, and stared at him, puzzled. "The 'Tony' note is the handwriting of Tony Drake!"

"Yes, Tony Drake might not have known of both these appointments, but Blaine Weaver must have. Drake made no attempt to cover the disappearance of Mrs. Weaver, but her husband did for, remember, the three letters purporting to come from Jenny after her disappearance were traced by Blaine Weaver, over a copy that I think was set by True."

"Yes," Juliet agreed. "But who else is in this note puzzle beside True, Weaver and Tony?"

Clarges shrugged his shoulders. "That is what I don't know—yet."

Juliet rose from her chair, and went toward the outer office.

Clarges started to speak, thought better of it and watched her open the door, in silence.

"What does this all mean?" they heard Tony Drake say, as the door opened. He stood in the outer doorway. "What's True doing here? Is this some rotten third degree stuff you are trying, Manning?"

Neither Jane nor Bill Davis had been able to stop him. They stood near him, agitated and silent.

Juliet saw the look of one reprieved in True's eyes. "Don't make a fool of yourself, Tony Drake," she called quickly, and crossed to Bill. "Julian?"

"O.K., but it's more than you deserve," Bill told her savagely.

Manning's voice stopped Juliet's indignant retort, although it was to Tony he spoke.

"Porter Hallay has just been arrested for entering Mrs. Jackson's house, stealing her property and trying to kidnap her boy. Your butler tried to release him, and failed. We have asked True nothing. He has been asking us a great deal. Nothing less than that we let Porter go."

Tony Drake stared at True. "Well, why are you holding Porter?" he jerked out, precisely as though True had ordered him to ask it.

"I've told you," said the county attorney, brusquely.

The telephone rang in the silence that followed. Manning reached for the telephone and, at the same time, the officer entered with the copies of the letters found in True's car, which he handed to Manning, who put them in his desk and locked it before he answered the telephone.

Juliet moved between Tony and True and signalled to Bill Davis to shut the door. He did so and, obedient to her nod, stood against it. It would be difficult for True to make a getaway if Manning wanted him, Juliet thought with satisfaction.

"Yes," said Manning into the telephone, in a tone devoid of all apparent perturbation or excitement. "Yes," again, and finally: "In the morning here at ten."

Then he turned to Juliet. "Can you be here at ten?" he asked her casually.

"Yes," Juliet said, at once.

"All right. Ten," said Manning into the telephone and hung up the receiver. He looked around and then said, with a quick, direct look that made True instinctively straighten up, and Tony look nervous: "Clear out, True, and keep out of mischief for a time, if you can. Porter stays where he is for as long as I think best. He's been giving us too much trouble lately."

True moved, as though to speak, but Manning instantly stopped him. "Nothing more from you, to-night. I'm fed up with lies. You'll stay, Tony."

He crossed to the door and, gently manœuvring Big Bill out of the way, he held the door open for True, who went reluctantly. True gone, he turned to Juliet. "I want to speak to you a moment in there." He indicated the inner office.

Juliet followed him and, as soon as they were inside, Manning said: "I'm arresting Tony to-night. Get the girl away."

CHAPTER XI

THE morning of the first day of the trial broke clear and gorgeously fair. The air was like wine, the sea and the sky so blue that it dazzled one. Juliet rode to the county seat with Bill Davis who was a very silent companion. They could not bear to discuss what was before them. Juliet felt chagrined that she had not been able to prevent Tony's arrest; although Tony's stubborn, sullen attitude was answer sufficient for all that had happened to him. He took little, and that rather scornful, interest in the preparations to defend him. He seemed confident that the truth in some mysterious way, without any effort on his part, would set him free. While Davis and Juliet used every effort to secure Andrew Dickerson, one of the best known criminal lawyers in the East, and their great friend, to defend him, Tony was apathetic.

Dickerson had, so far, been unable, because of a previous case he had undertaken, to promise definitely and they were still uncertain as to whether he would be there to open the case. Terriss, the lawyer employed by Mrs. Drake, was to take charge until Dickerson came, and to assist him.

Tony not only refused to talk but threatened to refuse to testify in his own behalf. Juliet felt that that would be calamity and begged that no one discuss it with him. They must declare the necessity for it, when the occasion arose, and force him to do it.

But, even though she was dissatisfied with the case and her own part in it, to be in Maine in September when the Labour Day exodus has emptied the summer

hotels, inns and boarding places, and most of the way-side stands have closed, was wonderful. To have the gorgeous woods and beaches practically to oneself; to see the little towns slip back into their accustomed groove; to meet the people who live, really live, in a place, instead of mere visitors for a long or short time, was to be rarely privileged.

The early fall days were warm, but the nights were cold now. The open fire was no longer a luxury, but a necessity, and the blazing hearth was like another friend.

The little group of artists still in their cottages and studios had drawn closer together. Almost every night there were meetings around someone's fire-place and opportunities for long talks and for discussions of books and people that the crowded summer had not held.

Never, since the short summer directly after their marriage, before Esmond Jackson had become an impossible husband, while he was still the most delightful lover a woman could have, had she been so happy. She had not, in years, been able to live in the country with Julian, and he was well and strong.

She sighed as she glanced at Bill. He was, if anything, an embarrassment, just now. If she tried to forget, for a few moments, the tragic business that had brought and kept her here, his face reminded her. It was drawn and set with anxiety. Though he said nothing to her about his personal feelings, she knew that he was sick at heart over Tony Drake. Juliet had little comfort for him for she, herself, was anxious. Never had she faced a more baffling mystery. She could reassure herself by saying that she was quite sure that Tony Drake was really innocent, but was she? The facts, as she assembled them in her mind, with due regard for any surprise the county attorney might be

preparing for her when the trial opened, were that Blaine Weaver had seen his wife home that night, and that later Tony Drake had been seen with a woman of the same height as Jenny Weaver, and presumably Jenny, hurrying along toward the wood road only a little way from where Jenny had been found, and he refused to explain or say who the woman was.

The search for the missing head had not been in any way rewarded, although many men, agents of the police and others, had scoured the woods, and private citizens, spurred on by the reward offered, did their share of the searching.

It was one of the thorns in her earthly paradise here that Porter Hallay had broken gaol and was still missing, although the county attorney took that very lightly, saying that, at any moment, he could lay his hands on him. Juliet privately thought it hardly a thing to be taken lightly. It gave her a never ending fear that made her keep Julian within her sight, or leave him only when she knew that he was well protected.

Julian and Marian were to be the Commodore's guests to-day. The Commodore was one of the few who kept his house open after Labour Day, and Juliet appreciated his thoughtfulness in providing Julian with a devoted bodyguard from the men on his yacht.

Bill looked along the road in front of him and saw that all the Losts, North, South, East, West were on their way to the county seat. He straightened his shoulders. "Mustn't look as though we were going to our own funeral, eh?"

"Decidedly not. Cheerful and unafraid is our cue, although I must confess that Tony Drake makes me furious. He has such a pig-headed, boyish way of thinking that the gods will rescue him without any trouble, that I am filled with terror. Maybe his faith

will be justified, but it will need the intervention of gods, not men, at this rate."

"Yes," Bill agreed, "but the gods seldom work without mortal aid. If Tony would give himself a chance, just a halfway decent chance, I would have more faith, myself."

"I have been to more murder trials than most," Juliet said, after a pause, "and, believe me, we mortals must be up on our toes and working hard or there will be a verdict before the gods wake up." Then, as Bill said nothing, simply frowned at the road before them, she asked: "Is his mother coming to-day?"

"I don't know. I haven't had any answer to my last wire." Then he burst forth angrily: "Good God! Why are some women allowed to be mothers?"

"Don't blame God," said Juliet savagely. "And, Bill, when that woman does come, keep me away from her, or I will probably say something emphatic."

"Don't worry. I'm prepared to say a few coarse, common things, myself."

Jane's car passed them, going slowly and steadily forward, driven by a white-faced Jane, beside whom sat a placid, sweet-faced woman, Jane's mother. If it was bitter for her to know that her cherished, only daughter was to be a witness in a murder case, she did not show it. She smiled sweetly at Juliet and Bill and lifted a slender old hand in greeting.

"Why didn't Tony have a mother like that?" Bill breathed.

Juliet laughed. "Be content that he will have such a mother-in-law. And now, Bill, I am going to ask you to do something that you won't like to do. Let me out a block or so from the courthouse. I want to sense the crowd and join my fellow pressmen and women."

"Think it's necessary?" Bill was reluctant. He felt all at sea without this redheaded imp at his side.

"Sure of it. I'll wait at the side entrance at the noon recess, so don't act as though you had lost me for ever. I'm fighting mad, Bill, at the way this thing is heading. I've got to be on my toes."

"Nobody can blame you, Juliet," Bill said, quickly. "We wouldn't have got as far as we have, but for you. Wait till Andrew Dickerson gets here."

"What do you suppose Andy will say to us, if he comes?"

"He hasn't said when he will come yet. I hope to God it's soon," Bill told her, and stopped the car. He watched her disappear among the crowd. He saw her greet several of the newspaper men, and join the group of smartly dressed women whom he knew to be newspaper and magazine writers, for this trial was of more than local interest.

As he parked his car, he thought quickly that women writers, nowadays, are far from being the badly dressed, forward and rather untidy person the old-style novelist used to portray. The woman who headed the Daily Talks to Girls in one of the leading New York papers was on special duty here, and was as smartly dressed and as carefully groomed as any society woman. As he climbed the steps of the courthouse, Bill told himself that it was an odd congregation that had gathered in and at the old courthouse with its clean white paint and green shutters. Its air of peace was strangely at variance with its purpose. The sunlit street in front of it was crowded with vehicles of all sorts, from the cheapest motor cars to some of the most expensive. Farm wagons and trucks and even one or two old "buggies" were drawn up to the kerb. Indeed, the line of vehicles stretched around the corner and down the side streets. A great bus was discharging passengers at the corner, and all about the courthouse steps stood people who were not usually seen in a small town, for

this trial was assuming the character of a *cause célèbre.*

The wide, old-fashioned courtroom was crowded to discomfort. The cellars had been invaded by the wires of the Associated Press and Western Union. In the courtroom, before the judge entered, there was the noise and tumult of a great crowd disputing its right to enter, and pushing its way past those who had been provided with tickets. There was trouble in the gallery where part of the press had been given numbered seats. These seats were occupied by citizens who had established themselves, prepared for a long stay. Gradually and carefully moving them to another part of the gallery, trying to avoid actual fighting, the old doorkeepers mopped their brows in exhaustion.

One old dame, of seventy and more, had obstinately refused to move until they had obtained a seat nearby for her. Even then she announced loudly that she had: "Paid taxes for fifty years, and if anyone has a right to set in this place, I have. And I'm going to set here, and hear tell how that young hussy, Jenny Codey, that married a Weaver, came to her onpleasant end. I ain't many pleasures left and I dun't intend to be cheated of this one."

In the corridors, to the distinct discomfiture of the law, as represented by two grey-haired and corpulent officers, the crowd fought and hustled each other for a place near the door.

It was, however, a fairly good-natured crowd, and the officers met it with equal good-nature.

"How are you, Miz' Snelling? How'd y' heave yourself up this far? There's no chairs left this side of the gallery, but if you was to go down them steps to the side, why Jim Herman's ushering there and maybe he can take y' apart and squeedge y' in by sections."

From the walls of the courtroom portraits of stern old judges frowned down on the people there assembled.

A long table had been arranged for the press, but half of the press could not get near it. Other chairs and a long board in front of them had been hastily arranged to accommodate them. Juliet was not there, however. She had chosen a seat in the middle of the rear gallery where she could see and hear and slip out easily when she wanted to wire her paper, or to consult with Bill Davis.

The judge entered, and the crowd in the court rose with a rustle and a clatter. The sonorous: "Hear ye, hear ye! All manner of persons having business, etc., etc." died out. The quaint old words chilled Bill Davis with sudden fear. This trial, which he had so long dreaded, was an actual and terrible fact. He glanced at Tony, near whom he sat, and saw his face grow paler, his mouth more set.

Jane, in her seat in the middle of the courtroom with other witnesses, involuntarily clasped her hands together in pain. Oh, her poor sensitive Tony! How would he bear all this crass curiosity, this open staring at him!

Juliet Jackson watched only the tall man, with picturesque dark hair, flecked with white, who rose from his place among the array of counsel for Tony and the local lawyer, who represented Blaine.

The judge greeted him and, as the courtroom stared, a motion was made and granted, *pro hac vice*, permitting Andrew Dickerson to appear, for this occasion, in behalf of the defendant, Drake. There was a stir among the newspaper men. They all knew Dickerson, and also knew that, though he had married and tried to retire to lead a leisurely country life, half the legal world, and all the great criminal trials were still brought to his door. It was a great thing for any defedant to have Andrew Dickerson on his side.

The first part, the choosing of the jury, seemed to

Juliet, who was hoping to have it take a long time, to move with incredible swiftness. In a little more than an hour the choosing of the "twelve good men and true" had been accomplished. Juliet was interested in the jury material presented for choice. These staid, reputable farmers, fishermen and small town business men were very different from the varied nationalities represented in a modern city. It is true that several foreigners presented themselves, but they were mainly Portuguese who had lived so long in Maine that they no longer felt themselves, or were thought to be, foreigners. The prosecutor was extraordinarily careful, in his selection, to find out if any of the men were engaged in any way, or in any occupation, which made them dependent on the Drakes, or the Drake estate, for a livelihood.

The one thing that the defence stressed was that it wished men of middle life, old enough to be the father of the boy who faced them as co-defendant.

The difference between the two defendants was marked: Tony, a boy in years, sullen, silent, but intelligent, and Blaine Weaver, good-looking, even handsome, but with cunning rather than intelligence. And how they hated each other! That was apparent to all. Tony never looked at Blaine, or spoke to him, although Blaine was cunning enough to seem amiable. It was Tony who refused to pretend and sat with face averted from his companion in misfortune.

Manning, the county attorney, was direct and simple in his opening speech for the state, and the first witness called, late that morning, was Rodney Barber. He came to the witness stand with a curiously grave and dignified manner, and looking straight before him gave, without a single false move or word, the history of the finding of Jenny Weaver's weather-bleached bones in the woods on the Drake place.

As Manning finished his direct examination, and there was a pause as he turned over his witness to the defence, Juliet looked toward Tony's table with a quick feeling of relief. She said "Thank God," in her heart, for Andrew Dickerson, and then concentrated her attention on the cross-examination, conducted for the defence by Terriss, Tony's attorney.

Carefully he led Rod along his way. After all, there was little to be done with this witness to the finding of the incomplete skeleton, except to ascertain when he made the discovery, and to once more emphasize the fact that last winter this man had been but two or three feet from the tree under which the skeleton lay, and yet had seen nothing. Rod admitted this, but dryly called the attorney's attention to the fact that the snow, last winter, had been so deep that they had had to dig it away from about some of the trees before they could cut them down: that the tree, under which the bones and the remains of the dark blue dress lay, was too small for cutting, and so did not receive any special attention, nor was the snow under it disturbed. The season before that they had been cutting at the other side of the wood and the road, and had not noticed anything peculiar about that tree, for its branches grew low and covered the skeleton.

It was not until these branches had been brushed aside that the silver buttons, tarnished as they were, had caught his eye, and now, with the mention of these silver buttons, came that curious phenomenon that Juliet had often noticed in a courtroom. She was absolutely certain that Terriss, the young attorney, had no thought of specially cross-examining this witness on that fact. In short, his feeling was shown in his questions: I'll examine this man only as to the necessary facts of the discovery and then dismiss him, was in his air, was in his voice, and either it was great art on his

part or, as Juliet believed, the presence of Andrew Dickerson that made him suddenly stop and hesitate. Yes, Dickerson had leaned across the table and touched Terriss lightly on the sleeve. The attorney stopped and, asking the witness to wait a moment before answering his last question, turned to the great man. For a moment or two they talked together and then Terriss nodded. He once more repeated his question to the witness, and asked him, also, whether he had stumbled across, and so disturbed the bones.

Once more, Rod reiterated that he had not done so, that they had lain there as they had been placed there, for all he knew. It was the silver buttons, tarnished, but still, from their very substance, showing a little gleam of metal which had challenged his attention in that nest of bones and pine needles.

And then the first sensation of the trial was launched in a totally unexpected manner. "Was it simply that the buttons were in an unusual place, for buttons, that made them arrest your attention, Mr. Barber, or was it that, as you looked at them, you had the sensation that you had seen those buttons, or buttons very like them, before?"

The prosecuting attorney was on his feet to object, but the judge, after rehearing the question, saw nothing in it to show that the attorney for the defence was breaking new ground. The direct examination, after the finding of the body, had included the bones and the buttons, and the question was allowed.

Then young Terriss asked the question again, laying emphasis on the last part. Had he seen those buttons, or buttons similar to them, before?

There was a marked hesitation before Rod replied: "Well, from the first they kinda struck me familiar-like. Yes, sir. But it wasn't until I'd sent Benny Henty for the coroner and took to studying them buttons that

it kind of flashed on me that I had seen their like before."

"And where did you think you had seen them before?"

This was instantly objected to, but after a little legal sparring, allowed.

"Well, it came to me that I had seen just them buttons, or buttons very like them, on a dress once wore by Mrs. Drake."

"Mrs. Lowell Drake?"

Rod nodded. "Yes, it was knowed," he added quietly, "amongst us that knowed Jenny well, that she was always trying to get a holt on some of Mrs. Drake's old clothes, on account of their fitting her so good. They was about of a size, Jenny Weaver and Mrs. Drake."

There was an audible intake of breath in the courtroom as people agreed, or disagreed, with this statement, but there was an instant hush as the defendant's attorney, after a moment's whispered consultation with Andrew Dickerson, asked Rod if he had ever seen Jenny in this dress belonging to Mrs. Lowell Drake.

"Yes, I saw Jenny in that dress the day she—the day she kinda disappeared, or the night, rather. Saw her at the firemen's carnival supper and saw her on the street with her husband, Blaine Weaver. She was wearing that dark blue dress with the buttons."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, sir, I'm sure. There was a lot of us knew they was real silver buttons. You see, Jenny had blowed about them, and that she hoped when she got them she would get the brooch too—that's the big one, the kind of open-work one that fastened the neck of the dress. Jenny had been kinda feared that Mrs. Drake might take off the brooch and buttons before she gave the dress away, and she was just about crazy-pleased when

she found that they were on it, when Alonzo True brought it to her."

"Alonzo True brought it to her?"

"Yes, sir."

"Are you sure of that?"

"I am. Wan't I there when he brung it down to Codey's place less'n a week, about five days before the carnival?"

How reticent this big man had been. How much did he know that he had never told, Juliet wondered as she listened. She had been striving to bring True into the case without involving Tony Drake, and lo, here he was!

"What did he say when he brought it down there?"

"He said lots of things. I can't remember all he said."

"About the dress?"

"About the dress, he said that Jenny had been after it for a long time, and she could have it now, if she'd do something he wanted done."

"What was that?"

"He didn't say. He gave Jenny the wink and said that he wasn't asking her before everybody. He didn't want his business spread around the town, so he tipped her a wink and then went outside, and she followed him."

"And that was all you heard?"

"That was all I heard about the dress."

"Did Jenny willingly go outside to talk with him?"

"Sure. She wanted the dress. Anybody could see that. She wanted it bad. You see, Jenny always kinda fancied herself as looking like Mrs. Drake."

"Did she?" said the defendant's attorney, trying to make time while he thought out where this was leading him.

"Some. Jenny was a lot younger."

"Did you ever learn what Alonzo True asked Jenny to do for the dress?"

The prosecuting attorney, although every word was helping him in the case, made his perfunctory objection to the question as irrelevant, incompetent, and immaterial. This was dismissed and noted, and then the witness answered slowly:

"Well, no, not from either True or Jenny directly, but everyone in that room kinda sensed what it was that Alonzo would like Jenny to do."

"And what was that?"

"Chuck Blaine Weaver and get a divorce."

"Why?"

"Oh, everybody knew that Alonzo True was kinda gone on Jenny, himself."

The defendant's lawyer, about to put another question, was pulled down gently into his chair by the strong hand of Andrew Dickerson, as the prosecuting attorney launched a vigorous protest against this line of questioning.

While he argued, Dickerson whispered to Terriss: "Don't let anything about Alonzo True sidetrack you. Keep pounding about the dress. This witness might build a bridge of escape for Tony Drake."

Rod looked about the courtroom with a slightly cynical eye while counsel argued. Here he was ready to tell these lawyer-fellows what he knew and suggest more, if they would let him. He had been in court before and, besides a goodly share of native intelligence, had the natural reticence of a Maine man; but he was out to help Tony Drake and could, if only Tony's lawyers would use their horse sense. He looked across the crowded courtroom at Tony, sitting white and set beside Bill Davis.

This trial was a bitter experience for Bill, used to being admired and controlling the situation. He longed

to be back in Pennsylvania, in his own town, where people knew and trusted him, yet, as he sat beside Tony, his very longing made him realize something of what the boy must be suffering now. Lost Harbor, North and South, East and West, was really the only home that Tony Drake had ever known, although his mother owned several places in different parts of the country. To have Lost Harbor forget that he had been one of them, that he had gone to school with some of them, swam, sailed and fished with most of them; to have his town sit there staring at him, as though he were some new, strange monster; repeat stories about him, whisper about him, avoid him, shun him, must be something akin to hell for Tony Drake.

Bill saw Jane's set, white face, her eyes fixed on Tony. He sighed again. How women complicated things, great or simple.

Rod's quick eye shifted about, picking out all the well-known fellow-citizens amongst the crowd. There was something like a sneer on Rod's face as he looked at them. Crazy for something to do and see, he thought. The whole population of Lost, to say nothing of the outlying settlements, were here. And what for? Just to gape at Tony Drake, who had been good to most of them when 'twas hard scrabbling in the winter and harder sailing when sickness came. Nobody here remembers how generous Tony was with his money which wan't so easy for him to come by as some thought. That mother of Tony's had a way of keeping her hand on the purse strings, though some of the money in the purse must be Tony's own.

Among the witnesses, he saw Alonzo True, and smiled to himself. Lon won't thank me any for what I've said this morning, but I am here to state the truth, the whole truth, and to hell with Lon True if he doesn't like it.

The prosecution was unusually alert. There was a

feeling on Manning's part that, somehow, their own witness was putting over something they had not foreseen or guessed. While their idea of what that might be was still hazy, Manning was far too clever a lawyer to let it take him unawares, if he could help it. The advent of Andrew Dickerson had stirred him to greater activity and anxiety. Here was a lawyer with a great reputation, perhaps the greatest criminal lawyer in the country, come to this out-of-the-way town to dispute this case with him. Whether he lost or won it would be a great feather in his cap if he fought this man ably. He knew that Andrew Dickerson had the name of being the first to appreciate and speak with favour of any promising younger member of his profession. He would show both bench and bar that he was not afraid of this man and that he welcomed any test of the state's open-mindedness and the strength of his case. Yet, he could not help wishing that his clues were not so blurred by the three years that had elapsed since the commission of the crime; and tangled by motives that pointed four ways at once.

Rod's cross-examination was resumed with a quiet question from Terriss as to the reason why Rod had kept his surmise about the dress to himself.

He said, at once, that no one knew that Jenny Weaver was dead. It had been accepted by everybody that she had simply run away from Blaine Weaver maybe with one of the actors who were at the Opera House that night. The letters that were later received by Jenny's mother confirmed that belief. For all he knew there might have been another dress like that somewhere, or Jenny might have given it away. He didn't know surely, so he didn't speak until he had carefully examined it and convinced himself that those were the very buttons. Not many people in this part of Maine could wear real silver buttons.

His testimony was conclusive as to that, and one could see his audience, his townspeople and the jury, felt that he was testifying to the truth as he knew it. His cross-examination was brought to a close with a proviso that this witness might be called again for re-cross-examination, if the defence decided to confirm certain points of his testimony. This was duly objected to by the prosecution who, however, stipulated their right to redirect, if necessary, on these same points, but waived, for the present, any further examination.

Everybody breathed with relief as they watched Rod's stalwart figure leave the stand, sure that he had told the truth, and would not alter his testimony. Rod, himself, was inwardly calling them a lot of wooden heads for not taking him a little further along his way. If they would only be bold enough, he thought, as he looked toward Drake's counsel, there was a lot he could tell them. He comforted himself with thinking that he would probably be called again, and if he was, he decided to accidental-like blurt out a thing or two. That Miz' Jackson might get on to something then. There was a little woman he hadn't expected much of but, by George, he wouldn't be surprised, by the look in her eyes, if she got the idea first. Well, it was only an idea that he couldn't go to them outright with, but he'd tried to shoot it across. None of the men got it, but if she ever did—the fat would be in the fire.

CHAPTER XII

JULIET continued to look quietly about her, her green-blue eyes taking in everything that was to be seen. She was formulating a daring plan, and wishing that she could get Andrew Dickerson's ear.

Dickerson sat there coolly enough, waiting as the prosecution called the next witness, the coroner, who testified as to what he had found when Rod called him to the scene, and what had been done with the various articles which were now introduced as exhibits, namely: the buttons, the brooch and the rags of clothing. He testified, also, as to the position of the skeleton when found; as to the number of bones; and that the head was missing.

The cross-examination by Terriss was brief.

The doctor, who had assisted the coroner, was also called and gave his testimony as to the position of the bones, and that in his belief they indicated that there had been no struggle; that the body had been brought to the spot and placed there; that the number of missing bones necessary for a complete skeleton, were accounted for by the fact that the head and several of the smaller vertebrae were missing. He also stated his belief that they were the bones of a female, apparently five feet five inches in height, and that the body, after being placed under the tree, had lain there for not less than three years.

In cross-examination Terriss put several searching questions to the doctor as to the placing of the body there by someone unknown, as to the missing head, and

the durability of certain fabrics under time and certain weather conditions; as to whether there existed any marks on the remaining bones to indicate the manner in which the head had been severed from the body, but nothing startlingly new was elicited.

The next witness was Mrs. Codey, the dead girl's mother, who testified that her daughter, Jenny, had disappeared on the night of July 7th, 1927, that she had been told by her son-in-law, Blaine Weaver, that her daughter had run away with a play actor, who had been playing in a vaudeville sketch at the Opera House, during the week the firemen's supper and carnival had been held. She asserted that she had not believed him. She thought, and she always would think, that Blaine Weaver knew more about it than he said.

Manning tried to shift her from this train of thought but not before she had made several rather damaging statements to the effect that Tony Drake had hung around her daughter and that Blaine Weaver knew about that, but never did anything, though he pretended to act jealous, and she wouldn't be surprised if he had sent her the letters to cover up the tracks for Tony Drake. No, it would be just like that double-crossing snake to do it to get something off of Tony Drake.

For the first time, the attention of the court and Juliet was drawn to the other prisoner, who sat a little apart from Tony Drake, attended by his own counsel. He stared back at his fellow-citizens and the strangers that filled the courtroom with a certain amount of interest. It was Tony who looked ashamed, not Weaver.

Manning, finally, got Mrs. Codey to testify more specifically about the letters and they were introduced into the evidence. They were read aloud in court and Juliet, watching Tony Drake's face knew, at once,

that he was relieved that the contents were not more revealing.

Coarse and common as Blaine Weaver was, and cruel as he had been, there was, at least, in these letters no stressing of this and Juliet's heart sank as she heard them read. They had a certain rough, poetic flavour that was appealing and could readily be twisted to support Manning's theory that these letters had been written by a far more sophisticated person than Blaine Weaver, unless Blaine had a vein of poetry in his make-up, hitherto unsuspected by anyone. Manning's theory was that a highly intelligent person, such as Tony Drake, had either dictated them or written them "down". At all events, they were sufficiently appealing to rouse a great deal of interest and feeling, and Blaine was handsome in his coarse way.

There ensued a long legal battle as to whether they should be admitted in evidence at this stage of the trial or held until the handwriting expert was called. After an exhaustive argument they were finally admitted by the judge and the objection to their admission by the defence, at this time, noted.

Mrs. Codey, then identified the letters, admitted that she had received them at the local post office, and that the envelopes, only one of which had been kept, were all postmarked "Boston", that she had, at first, really believed them to be Jenny's, but now suspected them to be "only another of Blaine Weaver's dirty tricks." They looked something like Jenny's writing but Weaver's handwriting was like that too. They might be Tony Drake's, for all she knew, for they wrote "something alike, only Blaine's hand is kinda thicker and more inkier." She grew vehement as to the "dirty tricks" of which Blaine and Tony were capable, and had to be suppressed once or twice by Manning and the judge. Nevertheless, despite the constant inter-

ruptions and exceptions made by Terriss, Manning managed to produce the effect that, although Mrs. Codey disliked her son-in-law and suspected everything he did, still the idea that these letters were a trick of Blaine Weaver's was a late development, only acknowledged after the discovery of Jenny's skeleton.

Juliet, knowing Dickerson's habit of getting what he wanted and knowing, also, that Manning was absolutely fearless and that not even a distinguished New Yorker could upset his conviction that Maine, while honoured by his presence, was not awed, watched with excitement Dickerson rise to conduct the cross-examination of Mrs. Codey.

Dickerson's fame had preceded him and there was a distinct hush in the assembly as Terriss indicated with a smile that the witness was Dickerson's.

"Mrs. Codey," Dickerson began, "I know that this is very hard for you, and we will try to make your ordeal as short as we can, but I would very much like to know whether you saw anything of Jenny the day or night of her disappearance."

"No, I'd saw Jenny the night before and she promised to meet me early at the firemen's carnival, but she never. When I heard tell that she was with Blaine again, I knew the reason."

"You and your son-in-law were not on good terms?"

"Wan't that so much as that Jenny'd promised me she'd have nothing more to do with Blaine, and I knew that if she was with him again, she'd never want to see me. She'd be ashamed."

"So that from the night before the tragedy, until the skeleton was discovered, you knew nothing of Jenny's whereabouts?"

"I knew nothing, but I suspected more'n something. Blaine Weaver, himself, will tell you that I've called him 'murderer' more than once."

"Before or after the receipt of these letters?" Dickerson asked quickly.

"Before and after," said Mrs. Codey.

Dickerson smiled, having made his point, although this was strongly objected to by the prosecuting attorney as not founded on the direct examination. It was, however, allowed and his objection noted.

Once more Andrew Dickerson turned to his witness: "Mrs. Codey, how soon after Jenny's disappearance, did you see and talk to Blaine Weaver?"

"Some time that week. Either two days after, or three. I don't remember which. Miz' Hickey, she sent down to know if Jenny was with me, and I says no. It was the first I knowed Jenny wan't on her job. Then that afternoon Blaine come down, and asked if Jenny was there and I told him she wan't, and he says——"

Objected to by defendant's counsel as hearsay.

"Now, Mrs. Codey, never mind what Blaine said. Just tell us what happened."

"Well, he says——"

"No, Mrs. Codey, the law does not allow you to tell what 'he said' or 'she said'. You must not tell us your conversations. That's what they call hearsay. You must tell us just what happened."

"Well, he come down and says is she here, and I says she ain't, and you know it. What have you done with my Jenny, you murderer, you."

Again the county attorney arose to object and the last part of the sentence was stricken out.

"I ask him what he had done with her," shouted Mrs. Codey, beginning to enjoy herself and feel herself important. "And he says——"

"Not what he says, Mrs. Codey," advised the Court.

"Well, he comes and tells me that he don't know anything about where she is and I up and tells him he lies."

She had got it out whether they liked it or not, and again the latter part of her sentence was ordered stricken out as irrelevant, immaterial, and not proper cross-examination.

"Did he tell you that he knew where she was?"

"Well, he did say something about her going off with a play actor and that I'd probably hear from her soon enough."

"That was before you got the letters?"

"Yeah, I got the first letter maybe about a week or so after that."

"Now, Mrs. Codey, was there ever any mention of the defendant, Anthony Drake, in connection with your daughter's disappearance until after the finding of the body?"

"No, sir, there wasn't any general talk, but his name had been mentioned, casual like, by several parties, before that."

"And these several parties who mentioned it were?"

"Blaine Weaver, 'Lonzo True, 'n Porter Hallay."

"No one else?"

"No one else."

"Did you, yourself, connect him in any way with your daughter's disappearance?"

Objected to. Objection noted and witness directed to answer.

"No, sir. Not at first, that is."

"And afterwards?"

"Afterwards, when them fellers mentioned it, I remembered that Tony Drake had always kinda hung around Jenny, and when I was told that he had been seen that night, the very night that Jenny disappeared, going toward the wood road with her, why then, of course, I got to suspicioning——"

"But that was after the finding of the body, wasn't it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Now, isn't it a fact, Mrs. Codey, that, until the body was found and these suspicions planted in your mind by the people you mentioned, you had not the faintest reason for connecting Anthony Drake with your daughter's disappearance?"

"Well, that's true, and yet, it ain't true."

"Answer me yes, or no, Mrs. Codey."

"Well, I can't exactly, Mister. If I say yes, it ain't right so, and if I say no, it ain't right so. The fact is that I always thought it queer that Tony didn't say something to me about Jenny after she left their house, and I'd often remarked that to my childrun, and then when the body was found it seemed to me very suspicious that they was together on that road that night, especially since Blaine Weaver had sent notice to Tony Drake that he would break his bloody head for him if he found him hanging round his wife again."

"When was that?"

"Just before she disappeared."

Again Manning objected to this as not proper cross-examination, but his objection was not strenuous. Everything so far elicited from this garrulous witness was in favour of the prosecution against Tony Drake, but, for form's sake, he objected, thinking that Andrew Dickerson had some reason for so jeopardizing his client.

After the usual legal squabble, the cross-examination continued.

"Had there been a quarrel, to your knowledge, between Blaine Weaver and Tony Drake?"

"Yeah. After Lon True give Jenny the dress, Tony Drake he came along and offered Jenny money for it back. He was mad at True giving it to Jenny. He didn't like Jenny to wear his mother's clothes."

"Why?"

"Thought she wan't good enough, I suppose. But my poor Jenny wan't rich enough to get a di-vorce every time she wanted to change her man."

There was a snigger throughout the courtroom and the judge rapped for order, and threatened expulsion from the courtroom as the latter part of the answer was stricken from the records.

Mrs. Codey leaned back, satisfied. She had seen the dark, angry flush on Tony's cheek, and she was sure now that she had "got in a dig at them hightoned Drakes," which her friends and fellow-citizens would appreciate.

Mr. Dickerson's face was serene, however, as he said: "Mrs. Codey, please confine yourself to answering simply the questions I put to you, if possible, without wandering off into personalities. I am sure that you wish to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth, but you must not obscure it by these side remarks, or you will hinder, rather than help, justice."

Mrs. Codey subsided. The jury did not impress her especially as: Levi Bates, George Petro, Hallet Stephens, John Barney, Orwell Lamb, Haines Gilmour, John Cato, Elphizet Adams, John Smith, Harry Ames, Amos Geddes, and Turner Tobin, but collectively, as a jury, they frightened her.

"When," said Andrew Dickerson, relentlessly, "did you connect the defendant, Drake, with your daughter's death? Before, or after, the body was found?"

"After. I heard he had been seen going through the woods that night, with a woman on his arm."

Suddenly Dickerson, in view of another "hearsay" objection, seemed to abandon this particular line of questioning and abruptly asked: "Mrs. Codey, do you know, of your own knowledge, that Jenny was wearing the dress with the silver buttons the day she disappeared?"

"Well, I knew she was agoing to, because she sent me word by Rhody that she was going to the carnival and that she was going to wear it. Jenny told Rhody that Blaine Weaver wanted to sell that dress and the buttons, but she thought she'd talked him out of it. Anyway, she was going to wear it that once, if it was the last thing she ever did."

Again the prosecuting attorney rose to object and again Mrs. Codey whom, once started, it was difficult to stop, stated that Blaine had told her he had taken Jenny to Harbor Hall that night, and left her there, but that Porter Hallay said he'd seen Jenny at the cross-cut, with Tony.

"Where did this cross-cut lead?"

"To Drake's woods one way, or come out somewheres near the Opera House the other."

"And that was why you believed the story that Jenny had gone with the vaudeville actor?"

"I never," declared Mrs. Codey. "Because people seen them actors going for the last bus at 11.30, and my Jenny wan't with them."

"She might have been waiting at the bus corner, might she not?"

"She might've, but she wan't. She was lying dead in them woods." Mrs. Codey wept. "It just come over me, how she could be lying there and people not so far off from her."

Dickerson waited until she had composed herself, somewhat, and then asked: "But you never thought of connecting Mr. Drake with this disappearance, did you? Or of asking him about Jenny?"

"No," Mrs. Codey admitted. "Till Porter Hallay told me he'd seen Tony Drake going toward the woods with Jenny."

"You believed it was Jenny?"

"Yes, I sure did. Nobody else, but my trusting girl,

would have been so foolish as to go about with any man and Blaine Weaver around."

"Was Blaine Weaver around, to your knowledge?"

The prosecuting attorney rose to his feet to object to this as hearsay and irrelevant, but Mrs. Codey snapped her answer out before he could speak: "Yes, he was. Why Blaine told me, himself, he'd saw them together."

The courtroom grew still in expectancy.

"Blaine Weaver told you that?"

The prosecuting attorney insisted on being heard. Although it helped his case, he characterized this question as hearsay, and not proper cross-examination. Again the judge noted his objection, but permitted the witness to answer. The whole courtroom waited for that answer. It came quick on the repeated question.

"Yes, sir, he did. He said he followed them a little way into the woods to make sure it was Jenny, and that then he came back to where the path entered the woods and waited, and he saw Tony Drake come out alone!"

"That's all, Mrs. Codey."

He turned away, and Manning snapped: "No re-direct."

There was a murmur all over the courtroom, as Mrs. Codey came from the stand. The judge, after a glance at the clock, brought the morning session to a close.

Juliet caught a glimpse of Bill, so determined not to show how cruelly he felt Tony's position that his face was set in hard, unfamiliar lines. She was sick and sorry for him, but she must dodge him during recess.

The prosecuting attorney's brows were drawn together as he turned to his assistant. Andrew Dickerson certainly had sprung something. That Blaine Weaver had found his wife and Tony Drake together the night of Jenny's disappearance had been the prosecution's

big surprise to be brought out later on with tremendous effect. Here was Andrew Dickerson, although it told against his client, robbing it of the element of surprise, and even acting as though, somehow, it was to his client's credit! What was behind his bringing it out, now?

CHAPTER XIII

COURTHOUSE SQUARE, as reporters and magazine writers met outside, hummed. Andrew Dickerson's projection into this trial was worth many dollars to the newspapers. Juliet, who had been scribbling her notes throughout this session, had been first down the steps to the basement with her copy.

"Here is my stuff, Al," she called to her favourite operator. "I depend on you to get it through."

She purchased a sandwich, after much patient waiting, at the crowded tea room and sauntered down to the bridge near the railroad station, intending to lean on the rail and eat it, when she heard a soft, old voice say: "Mrs. Jackson, if you are not too hurried, come with us."

Mrs. Stover was with Jane in the car, and Jane was just about to pull out of the long row of motors. "Yes, do get in," Jane mechanically seconded her mother's invitation.

Juliet looked at them warily. "If you'll both promise not to say anything about the case. I am turning over something in my mind."

"I'm only going to drive a little beyond the bridge, then I'll leave you and Mother to talk or not, as you like. I have an errand for Tony, at the drug store. He wants toothpaste, soap and cigarettes."

"Good! I accept with thanks."

Juliet got into the car, and Jane drove them to the spot, and left behind the crowd that was over-running the main street. They turned their backs to the town, and looked out over the water. Juliet drew a long

breath and accepted a share of the luncheon Mrs. Stover had prepared. They talked of indifferent things as they ate, and when Jane left them to do her errands, Juliet took out her pad and pencil and began scribbling a detailed account of the morning's session.

As she wrote she was conscious that Mrs. Stover, repacking the thermos case and tidying up, was singing, over and over again, a few phrases of what sounded to Juliet like an old hymn. Presently it began to hum through her own head. She finished her writing, numbered the pages, put a rubber band around them, and snapped her pad and pencil back into the case. She would slip her stuff to the telegraph operator, just as she went into court, and he would put it through while she attended the afternoon session.

Again she became conscious of the words Mrs. Stover was singing. She listened, repeating them to herself:

> "Can a woman's tender care,
> Cease toward the child she bare?
> Yea, she may forgetful be;
> Yet will I remember thee."

It made her see the pew in the old Presbyterian church, and herself as a tiny girl spelling out those very words and watching her pretty mother sing them, years ago! She smiled as she remembered her thought then, that the words "child she bare" meant the sex of the animal and had wondered why any woman would choose a child she-bear as a pet.

She laughed aloud and said to Mrs. Stover: "I used to wonder about that song when I was little. I made up a story to myself about a woman who had a tiny she-bear that she first treated tenderly, but afterward became careless and forgot to feed, so that the Lord had to remember it."

Mrs. Stover laughed softly. "It's a lovely old hymn," she said, demurely regarding Juliet, "and so applicable to this case."

Juliet stared at her. "I don't see," she began.

"Don't you?" said the older woman sweetly. "Oh, try and see, Mrs. Jackson. Try!" Her soft, old hands were clasped tightly. "Jane is coming back, and I daren't hint any more. I am told nothing and I really know nothing, but I feel certain that you are ignoring an obvious clue? Jane's coming now. How do you think I like to see my only child doing errands for a man who's in gaol for murder, whether he's guilty or not?"

She began singing again softly, as Jane drew near: "Can a woman's tender care, Cease toward the child she bare? Yea—" The sweet, old voice repeated it significantly: "Yea, *she* may forgetful be," then ceased as Jane came up to the car and looked at them both with that quick, suspicious glance which was beginning to be second nature to poor, proud Jane.

Juliet waved the thick packet of notes. "I'll walk back, Jane, if you and your mother want to sit here for awhile. It was the greatest kindness bringing me here. I have all my stuff done and my mind free."

Again the old lady hummed the song and her gentle, old voice made the words stand out with a curious clearness to Juliet.

"I've got just the ghost of an idea," Juliet whispered to Mrs. Stover, as Jane, insisting on taking her back, climbed in the car.

"Don't be afraid of where it leads you, dear. I have great faith in you," Mrs. Stover said, softly, with a glance at her daughter's averted face. She placed a delicate, thin finger against her lips and looked at Juliet meaningly.

Juliet stooped and kissed the soft old cheek.

They drove in silence to the courthouse.

Juliet watched for Andrew Dickerson and caught him as he went through the courtroom doorway. "Andy, come to the end of the corridor with me, for a moment. I haven't got it worked out, at all, but I have the most terrific hunch that we're working under a terrible handicap without Tony Drake's mother."

"Good God, woman, get her here then!" was all Andrew Dickerson said.

She turned from him and hurried to the press seats to find some one who would feed her paper until she returned. It took only a few moments, for Juliet was a favourite, and always ready, herself, to help out. Then she interviewed the telegraph operator and arranged that the stuff supplied for her paper should be sent without delay.

Bill Davis was standing on the steps, looking for her.

"Andrew Dickerson says we've got to have Tony's mother here, Bill. Where is she?"

"At Newport," Bill said, uncomfortably. "She landed there, yesterday, from the yacht, with Lowell. She lets this case open without coming to back him! Tony's mother! Don't speak of Milly to me, Juliet. I could cheerfully murder her."

"Listen, Bill, you must do this for me and say nothing to Tony. Telegraph her, now, that I am motoring up and that, if she wants to save herself endless unpleasantness, she'll see me, at once."

"She'll never see you, Juliet, or if she does, she'll be rude as the devil to you, and I can't stand that. I'm not sure that she will see you, no matter what I say."

"She must. You telegraph Mrs. Drake that a friend of yours has heard a story that must be contradicted before it reaches Lowell Drake's ears. Or, is that enough to send her scurrying across the Atlantic?"

"I don't know." Bill was worried.

"Well, then, add that any move to escape me will only precipitate publicity, but if she sees me, I can stop that."

"Good idea." But Bill was still troubled.

"It's the best I can do on the spur of the moment," Juliet told him. "I've got to hurry home and induce Marian to go to Portland while I'm gone and take Julian with her."

"Better let the Commodore take him," Bill advised.

Juliet shook her head. "Can't be continually calling: 'Wolf! Wolf!' to the good old Commodore. I think this will be my safest move because, if Porter is still at liberty, he'll have ways and means of getting information about the yacht. If I send Julian away he may think I have taken him to New York, or Boston, and that he is entirely out of range. Anyway, it's worth trying." She sighed, for Marian was not a person one could move about light-heartedly.

Yet it was done, and it was Bill who brought it about. A hint to Marian that he thought it dangerous for Julian to be in Lost, while the trial was going on and Porter unaccounted for as yet; a second hint that he admired her for staying away from the courthouse, while curious women were crowding it to the doors; and a final vague promise that he, himself, would motor to Portland and bring her back, made Marian strangely docile when Juliet made the suggestion that Julian was better away during her absence.

Juliet was thankful that Marian went without fussing, but her eyes had an odd gleam in them when she thanked Bill for his help.

While Marian and Julian rode to Portland, well guarded, Juliet drove toward Newport, alone, her eyes shining with excitement.

She drove all night, and put forth from the yacht club in a power boat, in the morning.

Thanks to Bill Davis and his telegrams, Juliet's path had been smoothed before her and, as she climbed up the steps to the immaculate deck, she was ready to do battle for Tony. She followed the white coat of the young steward to that part of the deck where an awning was spread over a group of wicker easy chairs. In one of them sat a slim woman who, at first glance, looked far too young to be the stalwart Tony's mother. A second glance revealed her to be still youthful looking, but with eyes so entirely worldly and sophisticated that, while time had apparently made no impression on this woman, who had neither wrinkles nor grey hairs, one felt it had subtly stamped the soul that looked out of those eyes.

Swallowing her inward desire to take the woman by the shoulders and shake her, Juliet stopped and opened her own eyes wide. "I asked for Mrs. Lowell Drake. Surely, there is some mistake——"

"No, I am Mrs. Drake," the smooth voice said.

"But I mean Tony Drake's mother," the artful Juliet announced. "Surely, you can't be——"

Mrs. Drake smiled a slow, lovely smile that caused no disfiguring creases. "But I am. I was married awfully young, of course."

"It's hard to believe."

"You are Mrs. Jackson?"

"Yes." Juliet had recognized, at once, her pretty, superficial type, and had no intention of feeding her unlimited flattery. "I am a newspaper woman and Mr. Davis has asked me to come here and consult you about—certain things, before they become public property," she added, quickly, as she saw the look on Mrs. Drake's face.

"I really cannot——" She had not yet asked Juliet to sit down.

"I'm afraid you must. No," as Mrs. Drake started

to her feet and moved toward the door of the cabin, "you can't escape that way, Mrs. Drake. Either you discuss this thing with me and avoid a scandal or I go, at once, to Mr. Drake."

"Blackmail!" Mrs. Drake just whispered the word, but Juliet's face flamed scarlet.

"Would Bill Davis aid and abet a blackmailer?"

"Bill is a meddling fool," Mrs. Drake said venomously.

"He is Tony's only real friend. You'll regret it all your life if you let certain facts that the trial is bringing out, come to your husband only through the newspapers."

"What do you know?" Mrs. Drake moved nearer this dangerous woman.

"If you let that boy stand alone before the court on a murder charge, I shall see that every newspaper in the country has an item to-morrow to the effect that, rather than face her husband's anger, if he knew——"

Mrs. Drake grasped Juliet's arm so tightly that her nails dug into the flesh. "Be quiet! Be quiet! He mustn't hear. He thinks Tony a nuisance, but he would never—" She stopped and looked toward the windows of the salon near which they sat. "Sit down," she said, warily, moving further away from the window.

She was shaking as she pointed out the two chairs, and a tall, blond man, looking so young that his wife looked merely elaborately youthful beside him, came toward her. "Oh, I say, Milly, are you going ashore for luncheon?"

Juliet, thankful that her bluff had not been called, looked up at Mrs. Drake. Would she take this means of escape? If she did, Juliet knew it meant that she guessed how little Juliet really knew.

"I can't, Lowell. This is Mrs. Jackson, one of Bill

Davis' friends, and she's come all the way from Lost Harbor to tell me—about Tony. We'll lunch here."

A quick frown drew Lowell Drake's brows together. "How's the boy?"

Juliet looked up at him, without a smile. She knew his kind. Not really cruel, only so absorbed in not missing any fun that was going on that he put aside everything that interfered with his plans, even a murder trial. "Tony's case is desperate. He cannot be left to face this thing alone. He is getting a raw deal, and your wife's absence from the trial is influencing public opinion and making it harder for him and for his attorneys."

"I thought there was no doubt about it being all a mistake that Tony was involved, and no hurry until we had to testify, or something."

His wife did not answer, and he gave a quick, frowning look at Juliet. The woman was good to look at, there was no doubt about that, but she was redheaded. He had never fallen for redheads, too much pepper in their make-up. He liked them placid, like Milly. What was the matter with Milly, anyhow? Why didn't she speak?

Juliet could not stand it. These two, intent on their beauty and their sport, letting that boy drag through weary days in a courtroom filled with suspicion, accused of a horrible crime, fighting the thought that no one cared; that there were none of his own to step forward and say publicly: "It's a lie. He's innocent."

"Oh, how can you," Juliet burst forth, impulsively. "How can you sit here with half the state, and reporters from all over the country, sitting in that courtroom, staring at Tony, reading something suspicious in every move he makes! How can you! You are his mother!"

"What," asked Lowell Drake's cold voice behind her, "does it matter to you?"

Let it annoy them as much as it might. Juliet would give these two no quarter. "To the public, if Tony's own mother leaves him alone to face the gravest crime in law, he must seem guilty. Well, I'll tell—not one paper, but twenty—to switch the blame where it belongs. We'll write up the woman who forgets she is a mother! The woman who loves her husband so much that she forgets the danger her son is in."

She had done the trick. She felt the tension about her relax as Lowell Drake crossed to his wife and said: "I'll go too, Milly. We'll show them old Tony isn't as friendless as he looks. Won't we?"

Then he turned anxiously to Juliet. "It won't mean that she will have to go to court every day, will it? Milly's a delicate little cat, she can't stand as much as some." He touched his wife lightly, and affectionately, on the shoulder.

Mrs. Drake's face was a study in anxiety as she turned it now toward Juliet.

"I should think one or two appearances now, to show you are on your son's side, would quiet the talk."

"Can't see how the poor young devil got into the mess at all," said Lowell, frowning. "We'll use the boat, instead of motoring down. Where will we stay?"

"Drake House is open. Tony was there," Milly stammered.

"I forgot the house was open. Come with us, Mrs. Jackson. Any friend of Tony's or Bill's—" He grinned at her like a big, good-natured boy. "Which of them is it you have on the string?"

"Bill Davis. Tony's far too young." She saw that that mollified Mrs. Drake.

"Tony's nothing but a big, overgrown baby," Milly sighed. "Always getting into trouble. Come with me,

Mrs. Jackson, and choose your room. You'll see to everything, won't you, Lowell?"

Lowell frowned. "Bridge to-night, at Mother's. I'll send a note. D'you think we can get back in time for the Wharton dance?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," said Milly, a little bitterly. "It's Thursday night, isn't it? We might try."

They might, Juliet thought grimly, as she followed toward the cabin, but Juliet meant Thursday to find Mrs. Drake on the witness stand.

Her face was grave with foreboding, as she looked at Mrs. Lowell Drake's reflection in the mirror of the luxurious room assigned to her.

"Mrs. Drake," Juliet said, as she saw Milly go toward the door, with the excuse that she would send for Juliet's luggage and arrange to have Juliet's car sent on to Lost, "I must tell you, first, that things look more serious for Tony than you seem to imagine. You will have to answer a great many questions, Mrs. Drake, and one of the most important will be when you were last in Lost Harbor."

To Juliet's surprise, Mrs. Drake crumpled up into a limp mass, fell into an easy chair and began to whimper faintly.

Juliet, for the moment, forgot her rôle as a sympathetic friend of Bill Davis. In her eyes was the keen look of the ferret who has spied a rat's tail disappearing down a hole. Then she remembered why she was there. To get Tony Drake's mother to Maine. She bent over the prostrate woman and said: "Oh, Mrs. Drake, forgive me, but I am so anxious about your son that I forgot what a shock all this is to you."

Milly Drake moaned.

Juliet poured a little eau de Cologne from a bottle on the beautifully appointed dressing-table, which was crowded with expensive cold creams, lotions, skin

astringents, liquid powders and rouge and all the aids a fashionable beauty specialist unloads on the middle-aged. She began to bathe her forehead and hands.

Mrs. Drake quickly sat up and protested. "Don't, I'll be all right in a minute."

The faint pink tinge on the handkerchief warned Juliet that she had been removing some very skilfully applied make-up, and she stopped, at once, pouring out a glass of water from the thermos bottle. Mrs. Drake took it languidly and, adding a little liquor from a silver flask on the dressing-table, slowly sipped it, sighed, cast a weary look at the door, and said: "If it isn't absolutely necessary, we might put off going down until to-morrow. Lowell was to look at a new polo pony to-day. He won't care for anything that interrupts that."

Juliet could hardly trust herself with this woman.

"We must go, at once." There was a note in her voice that told Mrs. Drake it would be useless for her to press for delay.

Languidly she began to rearrange her hair and pat into place the soft ringlets that framed a still very lovely face, although it was obvious that these ringlets were not the colour they had been originally. They were a soft red-brown now, but Juliet could have taken her oath that they had once been a lovely ash-blonde.

"Tony," she began, watching Juliet's face in the glass, "is rather an awkward boy——"

"Rather a nice one, though."

"Oh, of course," Tony's mother said, a little impatiently. "But he makes difficulties where there are none, don't you think?"

"I don't know," Juliet said, honestly. "It seems to me that in this case he isn't making the difficulties. It seems to me that he is trying to shield someone else, who is making it difficult for him."

"Oh," Mrs. Drake said it slowly. "Oh, do you think so? Who do you think it can be?" Then a little vindictively: "That gift-shop girl?"

Juliet was conscious that she was being watched by means of the mirror. "There has been no suspicion of anything like that."

"Well, who else could it be?" Mrs. Drake asked. "No one but Jane Stover ever made eyes at Tony."

"Tony's handsome enough to intrigue any number of girls."

"Never looked at any other girl," Mrs. Drake affirmed. "If you want to know Tony's motive for keeping still, why don't you watch Jane Stover!"

Quite definitely Juliet felt herself repulsed by this pretty woman, who had no scruples about a young girl's reputation. She would cheerfully throw Jane Stover to the dogs if, by so doing, she could crawl out of—what? Juliet longed to find out before she went into court to-morrow. She would, anyway, make Andrew Dickerson listen to her suspicions. She smiled rather wryly. After all, what did they amount to? Not much. There was very little she could actually say against Mrs. Drake. All her actions could be explained easily and naturally and yet, her attitude was wrong; certainly not that of a mother whose only son has been wrongfully accused.

Yet, to put her on the stand might be dangerous, for every man on the jury would listen to Mrs. Drake, would take his impression from what she said, in spite of her slowness in coming to her son's rescue. One false move, and Juliet knew that Mrs. Drake would wreck everything. What man would believe that there was anything mean and cruel behind those pathetic eyes and that smooth, youthful face!

So, all the way back to Lost, for she was a good sailor, Juliet was her most amusing self, for she must, some-

how, gain the confidence of this difficult pair. She tried to make Lowell Drake forget the fact that he had dozens of things to do, although she knew that to go to Long Island, look at a polo pony, or go to the yacht club, dinner at his mother's, with bridge or a dance later, was the sum total of all the "business" he would execute that week.

During luncheon Juliet told some of her own experiences, and Lowell Drake found her more interesting than any detective tale he had read, but on deck, after luncheon, she artfully began on the Lost Harbor case, every time Milly slept. Before they neared Lost Harbor, Juliet knew that, though she was no nearer Milly Drake, she had converted an indifferent step-father into an active partisan, who was willing to spend both time and money to help Tony. Just how long this enthusiasm would last, it was hard to tell but, at least, it had been roused.

When they arrived at Lost Harbor, Mrs. Drake went, at once, to Drake House. "I am going directly to bed, to rest," she told Juliet, abruptly, "if there is any rest to be found in this place. I'm utterly wrecked with anxiety. I'll be at the courthouse to-morrow, if I'm well enough."

"She'll be well enough," suddenly interjected Lowell Drake, "or she'll come there on a stretcher. Tony's family are back of Tony, and the sooner that news gets about, the better for all concerned in this case."

"That is what I have been trying to tell you, Mrs. Jackson. Tell Tony his mother is here." Mrs. Drake murmured, with an odd, oblique glance at her husband.

Juliet, wearing the same thoughtful look that she had had on her face when she listened to this speech, climbed into her own car, which Drake's chauffeur had driven down to Lost but, once at the wheel, she permitted herself a grin. Not if I can help it, she

thought to herself. Tony shan't know that his mother is here until he sees her, if I have anything to say about it.

Bill Davis met her at the studio, and openly expressed his admiration for her achievement in bringing Milly Drake to Lost Harbor and her son.

"Took you to do it," he declared, then, a little jealously: "Did you hypnotize Lowell to work it?"

"No," Juliet said, so soberly that Bill's jealousy grew. "He's a rather likeable lightweight, though. I'm not very proud of the way I made her come, Bill. I bluffed. Bill, when was she here last? In Lost, I mean?"

Bill stared at her. "Darned if I know. Some time ago, I guess. Does it matter?"

"I don't know. The way she acted, when I asked her, made me think it did, but I may be wrong."

She found Andrew Dickerson and Terriss in conference over the day's result, and very solemn about it. Dickerson's dark eyes snapped as she told him that Mrs. Drake was here, but he did not wear the enthusiastic look of relief that Juliet had been waiting for.

"What's the matter," she asked, "don't you see what I've done?"

"Given us a very appealing mother to sit and gain sympathy from the jury for her son," said Andrew dryly, "in any other town; but they don't approve of Mrs. Drake here. They'll take a look at her clothes and wonder about her. She isn't the frail, little, grey-haired mother that stirs the great heart of the multitude. Far from it. Just how would you use her?"

It was Juliet's chance, but she shrank from using it. She hated the responsibility, or even the suggestion of forcing her diagnosis on this brilliant specialist. She looked down for a moment, choosing the right word,

before she said: "I'd like to see Mrs. Lowell Drake on the stand and have you ask her a few pertinent questions."

"Yes?"

Terriss was open-mouthed to protest, but Dickerson leaned forward, studying Juliet.

"Yes," Juliet repeated, trying to keep her voice steady and her face from showing her real excitement. "I'd ask her first, when she was last in Lost Harbor. Not when she was here officially, but when she last came to South Lost; then I'd ask her whether she had seen Jenny Weaver at that time; then I'd ask her who she was with."

"You would?" Dickerson leaned back and looked at her keenly. "And where would Tony Drake be all this time?"

"In the prisoner's pen," said Juliet swiftly, "where he couldn't interrupt, no matter how much he objected."

"Ah!" Andrew Dickerson looked up at Terriss, who was regarding Juliet with anything but a benevolent air. "You haven't much faith in that line of questioning, have you, Terriss?"

Terriss shook his head. "Mare's nest," he said. "Mrs. Drake wouldn't soil her hands with Jenny."

Juliet looked at Andrew Dickerson and said nothing.

"There's something in it, Terriss. How much I can't tell until I've asked those questions."

CHAPTER XIV

JULIET stood on the steps of the courthouse next morning and raged silently as she looked at handsome Bill, standing beside her. For a moment she felt as though she hated him, for nowhere could she see the Drake motor, and Bill was calmly betting that Milly would, somehow, double-cross her yet.

"Not even a son's danger would make Milly hurry," he declared, "and she'll take her time dressing for this occasion. For she'll dress up or down for it. Only death would make Milly Drake forget her clothes."

"Well, after all, there's a certain virtue in that," Juliet insisted, though she knew that if Julian were ill, or in danger, she would fly to his rescue, even if it meant driving all night and all day without time to think, or to stop and powder her nose, or change her clothes.

"The more I see of the process of the law, the more I wonder how lawyers and judges keep any faith at all in humanity," Bill said, following his own line of thought. "How can they watch them, listen to them, dodge the truth or lie outright, and have any belief at all in any man? And to think that you dig into the mess—as though you liked it."

Juliet's rage blazed up. "You want to save Tony, don't you, because you believe he's innocent and honest. Well? How can you save him; how can you find out anything if you are too clean, or too disgusted with humanity to dig up a little filth. Truth's at the bottom of the well, but as the well's choked up with dirt and lies, I'm to leave her there, I suppose, until the lies

choke her. Well, I won't. I—I love humanity—men. I want to help. Not only to clear the innocent, I find the guilty interesting, too. You go back into that courtroom, Bill Davis, and leave me alone to my thoughts and do a little thinking while you're there. Think about the people who are caught in the net of the law, and the people who try to cut the net for them, or untangle it, and remember they're all human. There isn't a distinct class of criminals. We're all potential criminals. You think that over."

Bill stared at her. "It's you I mind it for," he stammered. "It's all right for the others. You ought not to be there."

"Where should I be?" Juliet demanded.

"Home——"

"Oh, go and marry Marian," Juliet said, scornfully. "You think and talk alike!"

Deeply hurt, Bill turned, went toward prison to meet Tony, and left her gazing after him, a little ashamed.

But she could not afford to think of Bill.

Was Milly Drake reluctant to come here because her testimony would more deeply incriminate her son? Juliet's hands and feet grew cold at that thought for, if it should prove to be so, it would be because Juliet Jackson had brought her there.

Juliet looked toward the gaol and saw Blaine Weaver's cunning, fox-like face, with the gimlet points in his sleepy eyes, as he looked over the crowd, on his way from gaol to court. That man knew more, far more than he would tell, or than he would be allowed to tell on the witness stand, if his lawyer was clever.

Tony Drake followed him, his head high and his eyes turned away from the crowd toward the sky, the blue Maine sky, that had always been one of the things that Tony loved best about his Maine home.

How could people link those two men together in a

sinister crime. They were worlds apart, in everything. Surely, they would not be such fools, such utter fools, as to shut Tony away for ever from this blue sky which, from boyhood, he had loved when, lying in the woods, on the deck of a boat, or flat on the rocks, he had watched it, dreaming, while the white clouds went slowly and swiftly across it.

Yet Blaine Weaver had an alibi, and Tony had none, or none he would give.

Juliet was thankful that Tony's eyes were averted from the crowd, and that he was inside the courthouse before the Drake motor drove up to the steps. Before Milly Drake alighted, Juliet ducked through the crowd and made use of all her press privileges to get to Andrew Dickerson.

"Let it be just as court opens that you bring Mrs. Drake in. It will prevent a scene, when Tony sees her."

"Little pest!" Dickerson patted Juliet's hand. "You never miss a thing, Juliet, do you? Well, get out and leave me to work and pray, for God knows, but I don't know, where we're going."

Juliet watched, with interest, Dickerson's introduction to Mrs. Drake. The effect on Mrs. Drake was, at once, noticeable. She seemed to feel that here was a man on whom feminine wiles could be practised. He would not look at her as this Jackson woman had. She hated Juliet Jackson, who had brought her to this hot courtroom, to be stared at by all the people who had worked on the Drake estate, and known her long before her marriage to Tony's father. They probably called her "Milly Drake," to each other, and behind their searching eyes were, she knew, keen brains, the knowledge of human nature and life; often reduced to its lowest and most vulgar terms, but still life. They knew she was not as young as she looked, and made her feel it, through their admiration for her clothes and

her beauty. They were respectful, but they were not impressed.

She saw Rod Barber among the witnesses. He had worked for her father and for her, made money out of the Drakes ever since they had come here. Tony's father had liked Rod, joked and laughed with him, treated him as though there was nothing but money between them, and that that counted for little. Thank goodness, Lowell wasn't like that, and yet, could you be sure? Already Lowell had lost his bored look. He was looking about him and had caught sight of Juliet among the press seats. He waved his hand to her, for he was determined that this crowd should not think "Tony's people" were downhearted. Instantly Milly Drake's jealous heart pounded. Mrs. Jackson was a little, redheaded minx, a sort of police woman, and yet—and yet she was young.

Rod Barber pushed his way out from among the witnesses and went to the door for what he called a "waft of fresh air." He took it, standing out on the courthouse steps. He stood there until he saw Juliet, who had come out again to send a special wire. Rod came toward her and said softly, for her ear only, as she went through the doorway: "What are you doing it for? Don't you know what it'll mean to put that woman on the stand? You'll flummix up the whole case."

Without answering him, Juliet went back into the courtroom and was there when Tony Drake saw his mother for the first time. He gave a long, slow look around the courtroom, as though seeking escape, and then bowed his head, and sat down.

Juliet could see that, though Tony Drake said nothing and barely acknowledged his mother's smile, his hands were clutching at the arms of the chair in which he sat, and he lifted his handkerchief to mop the sweat from his brow.

But Blaine Weaver was looking on, grinning, and while that grin still continued to stretch his wide, but not unhandsome mouth, Porter Hallay rose up from among the witnesses, and went toward the stand.

Tony Drake's brows drew together. He looked at the man associated with him in everybody's mind in this court, and on so grave a charge, and his hands moved again. No one could guess how those hands were aching to be at the throat of Blaine Weaver and choke that grin from his face, the slow, lazy triumph out of his eyes. Tony never spoke to Blaine Weaver, if he could avoid it. Now, he hated him. He felt polluted by his presence, and yet, in the eyes of all Lost Harbor, here before his mother and his step-father, two beings so remote that to him they had often seemed like people in some play or tale, he stood linked with this clod. This handsome animal, with the brains of a pig and the habits of a homeless dog.

Juliet watched Porter make his way toward the stand. So, after all, the county attorney had been able to lay his hands on him when he wanted him, and she might safely bring Julian home. Then, as she saw the slow grin gradually disappear from Blaine Weaver's mouth, she realized that Porter Hallay might be one of the most important witnesses in this case. Certainly one of the defendants shrank from him, and Mrs. Drake's face was a white mask of fear, although she tried to keep a smile on it, and her eyes fixed, not on Tony, but on the frankly absorbed face of her husband.

Lowell Drake had never, in all his careless, pampered life, been in a courtroom; even his motor mishaps had been settled out of court and, to his amazement, for he was intelligent when he chose to use his brains, found it intensely interesting. If only his wife wouldn't look as though someone was stealing her jewels and Tony was less like an Indian captive being slowly tortured at

the stake, he could enjoy himself. It would be something to talk about at the club, or think about when he was sailing. This fellow on the stand, for instance, was just a good-looking fool, but that redheaded policewoman, or journalist, as she called herself, seemed to have ears and eyes for no one else and this Dickerson, the most important lawyer on Tony's side, was leaning forward as though he was reading something very absorbing in the lout's face.

Tony Drake moved his chair in order to get further away from Blaine Weaver, and nearer to Bill Davis who, after gravely greeting Milly Drake and her husband, took his customary seat beside Tony. That fool, Hallay, was Blaine's friend, ready to push Tony even deeper into the mire. God! It seemed impossible that circumstances and incidents could seem as damning as they did when Porter described them, yet people would believe him. Almost everybody here would believe Porter, except Jane and her mother and maybe that little redheaded woman and Bill. Tony drew himself up and tried to concentrate on the testimony.

Porter had been grinning, partly from nervousness, and partly from his usual desire to let the people about him know that he was not to be downed by any obvious disapproval on their part. But, when he faced the courtroom full of hostile eyes, for Porter Hallay had too many petty offences and misdemeanours to his credit to be loved by his respectable neighbours, his smile died away and a look of solemn woodenness took its place.

They were, he thought to himself, making a big to-do about Jenny Weaver. They had thought little enough of her when she lived. The town had been glad to get rid of her, yet now they were rousing heaven and earth to get hold of the man who had done them a good turn. Why there was Mrs. Drake! What did that mean,

exactly? Porter's eyes narrowed. He turned to give his whole attention to Manning and, sullenly admitted that his name was Porter Smith Hallay and that he was twenty-eight and that he did hauling, when he could get any to do, and wasn't helping with the lobster pots.

The eyes of the district attorney were on him. Porter liked Manning as well as the next. He was a Maine man, but that was not saying that he was going to tell him any more than he could help. Manning was no fool, though. He had been a poor boy around these parts and studied up and got himself made a lawyer.

Porter would have been delighted to know how much Manning feared him as a witness. Manning had absolutely no way of knowing how deeply Porter was involved in this investigation. He must find out and yet, with Dickerson following every move he made, he had need to be wary, lest his witness grow hostile and throw the whole weight of his testimony toward the defendants.

"Were you on the streets of Lost Harbor the night that Blaine Weaver took his wife, Jenny, home and left her at the door of the Harbor Hall?"

"Sure I was."

"Were you near Harbor Hall?"

"Sure. I was accrost the street."

"Did you see Jenny Weaver?"

"I did."

"Did you see Blaine Weaver?"

"Yes, sir."

"About what time was that?"

"About half-past nine."

"How do you fix the time?"

"It was quarter-past nine when I passed the jewellery store on Harbor Road, and I took a look at the clock and decided I wan't agoing home yet. So I went up the street a little ways and hung around."

"Why did you hang around there?"

"Well, I thought, maybe, Blaine and Jenny might come along and I wanted to see Blaine."

"You are sure that it was half-past nine?"

"There, or there about. I won't be exact to the very minute."

Andrew Dickerson felt that someone was staring at him hard. He looked up to find Juliet's eyes fixed on him. There was something in her eyes that impelled him to think about this very trifling bit of testimony, so he made a note on the pad before him and saw a relieved look in Juliet's eyes. He must, before he cross-examined this fellow, get from her what was troubling her at this point.

Manning led Porter on to say that he was nearly opposite Harbor Hall when Blaine drove up in "the team" and that Porter had watched Jenny get out of the wagon and Blaine follow her and go up the steps with her.

"Did they see you?"

"Not at first. They was kinda arguing."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Well, Blaine wanted Jenny to go home with him and Jen didn't seem so anxious." He sniggered.

No answering smile came from the courtroom. They were all tensely waiting. It was evident to Manning and Dickerson that the public had not expected this corroboration of Blaine Weaver's assertion that he had taken Jenny home that night.

"Did you stay until Jenny went into the house?"

"She never went into the house."

The simple answer was a distinct shock to Manning, as well as to the audience. It was what he had wanted, but he had not expected to get it from Porter Hallay. Who had given him leave to speak? Someone must have done so, for this witness was a totally different

man from the sullen fellow he had been talking with in jail yesterday.

"Are you sure she did not go into the house?"

"Yes."

"Where did she go?"

"She climbed back on the wagon again, and she and Blaine turned the team toward the state road, away from the town."

"In what direction?"

"Well, kinda Northwest, toward the Drake woods."

"Did Jenny appear reconciled to doing this?"

"Well, they was arguing pretty loud about it. They both talked at once, and neither of them listened to the other."

"What did you do? Did you watch the wagon out of sight?"

"No, sir. I started my car up and followed them."

"Why?"

"Because I wanted to see what happened. Things were generally pretty lively when Jenny and Blaine got to arguing." Again he grinned, but no one else smiled. Nothing so surely showed Porter's standing in the community as this fact: when he laughed, he laughed alone.

"Now answer me carefully, Porter, did they see you, or not?"

"They saw me, all right, because, naturally, my Ford ain't noiseless. I caught up to their team in no time, and when I came up to them, I hollered: 'Hello, there, Jen! Want any help?' And Jen let out a whoop and said: 'Take me home, Porter, I ain't going anywheres with this——' Say, I don't want no calling down for repeating Jenny's language."

Manning glanced at Dickerson. It was additionally nerve-racking that, where Dickerson might easily have interposed certain objections, no objections had been

made. He looked toward the judge and then said, quickly: "Repeat it, if it is repeatable."

"Well, she said: 'I ain't going home with this S. of a B.'" He gave the initials only, but throughout the courthouse those who knew Porter Hallay's habitual profane and smutty tongue were surprised at his reticence.

"Well, what did you do then?"

"Well, I kind of drove ahead of them a little and stopped the car and got out and went toward them to see if Jen wanted to come with me, and he wouldn't let her get out. He had one arm about her waist, holding her, and with the other hand he held the reins."

"Where were you when you stopped?"

"Well, Blaine and the team, they were on the State, or Harbor Road, just where you begin to turn off if you want to go to the wood road—the road leading to Drake's woods. They call that Sandy Road. My car, she was just around the corner of Sandy Road."

"Did Blaine stop when you ran toward him?"

"No, he kept right on, with Jen hollering at me and pounding him with her fists. Blaine, he was swearing, but he knew that nobody would be likely to hear, so he just let her holler. They called each other everything."

"Did he continue on the wood road toward his own home?"

"No, sir. Just at the entrance to Drake's woods and the beginning of the road leading through the woods, Blaine stopped and turned to Jenny and said: 'Quit your hollering, there's someone coming.' And there was someone running down the wood road, who called out: 'What's the matter? What are you doing to that woman?'"

"Did you recognize this person who came running, as you said, down the road?"

"Yes, he was running from the wood road, toward Sandy Road and, of course, as he came down the wood road the car's light was on his face, and I could see that it was Tony Drake."

There was a breathless silence in the courtroom. Here, at last, were the three principal characters in the tragedy, Tony, Blaine, and Jenny, brought together at the very threshold of the scene of the tragedy or, at least, to the place where the body had lain all these years.

"Did he see you?"

"Yeah, I was in my car at the side of the road and Blaine and Jenny and the team were a little back of me on the side."

"On the same side of the road?"

"Yep, on the right side of the road, on the side nearest the woods."

"Well, what happened then?"

"Well, Tony Drake came up to the wagon, and he spoke to Jenny, and asked her if she was hurt and she began to cry, and he turned to Blaine and said: 'Blaine, I've told you more than once to leave Jenny alone. She doesn't want to go with you. It just means another fight and some day, it will mean murder.'"

"He said that?"

"Yes, sir, that's what he said. 'Some day it will mean murder.'"

"Objected to," Andrew Dickerson interposed, "as being irrelevant, incompetent, immaterial and wholly hearsay, and the Court is requested to have the last sentence stricken out."

The Court, having ruled that the last sentence be stricken out, Manning proceeded: "What did Blaine do then?"

"He jumped down from the wagon and struck Tony, and Tony, he hauled off from him and then hit him a

crack on the jaw, you could hear a mile off, and Blaine he kinda swayed up against the wagon."

"Objected to," interrupted Andrew Dickerson, and there ensued an argument between the two lawyers and the judge, which ended in allowing both question and answer, and Porter was ordered to proceed.

Porter, who had never had a poor opinion of his own powers, was greatly intrigued at this opportunity to tell a striking story before an audience obliged to listen, and in silence, to what he chose to tell them.

"Well, Blaine, he kinda swayed, and he caught hold of Jen's dress and just about pulled her out of the wagon. And, as he righted hisself, I came round to the other side of the wagon and told Jen that here was her chance to get out of all this mess, get into my car and I could take her home to her mother's. But she kinda shook her head and then, as Blaine got steady on his feet and made a rush at Tony, she screamed again and ran to my car and got in."

"And the two men?"

"They was at it, hammer and tongs. Gee, but they were giving it to each other! So I started the car, but we hadn't gone but a little ways when Jen grabbed my arm and ordered me to stop, and when I did, she listened and it was kinda still and she said: 'Let me out, Porter. I forgot about something I have to tell Tony Drake, and I've got to keep them from killing each other, if I can.' And before you could say 'Jack Robinson' she was down outa that car and running back."

"Did you follow her?"

"No, sir, I'd had enough for the night. I waited awhile and then went on down the road and turned at the junction to go to my own home."

"You went without stopping at the junction?"

"Yes, sir, I turned to the right, and I went slowly home and jam into the back yard."

"Was there anyone in the house when you got there?"

"Pa and Ma was in bed in the front room."

"Anyone else see you?"

"Well, they didn't see me. They heard me, though, and Ma hollered to know what I was doing coming home that time of night, and I yelled: 'Snuggle down, Ma, 'tain't more'n ten, and I ain't been drinkin'.' And then I went into the kitchen and made myself a cup of tea and I seen a light in Codey's winder, and I called over to ask Ma and the girls to come and join me."

"Did they come?"

"Nope," Porter grinned. "Ma Codey told me to go to bed, and let other people stay in their's and slammed down the winder."

"Did you say anything to Jenny's mother about seeing Jenny?"

"Not me. I knew Ma Codey would only curse me out for leaving her with Blaine, so I didn't say anything then."

"Did you later? Did you tell me?"

"Nope," said Porter, "you didn't ask me anything about it."

"Direct examination closed," announced Manning.

The judge called the noon recess, as Porter took a look about him, from under his half-closed lids and wondered whether he might venture to signal toward Rhody who sat among the witnesses. He did so venture, but Rhody's back was turned to him, and she was being shepherded along the aisle by Ma Codey.

Juliet, stirred by this testimony, waited to see Andrew Dickerson, but the great man was in no mind to talk. This morning's testimony required all his attention. He was not lunching in public. He instructed a messenger to send a glass of milk, a chicken sandwich and a piece of pie to Terriss' law office nearby

and announced that he was not to be disturbed. Desperately, Juliet clutched at his arm.

"No, I won't listen to you, Juliet. You'll disturb my own train of thought."

"I don't want you to listen to anything, I want to warn you——"

He released himself, impatiently, and then, as she started to turn away, his hand shot out and touched her shoulder. "Forgive me, Judy," he said, softly.

"This was queer testimony. Do you think the man's lying?"

"In spots," Juliet told him, quickly. "But only in spots. In the main he is telling as much of the truth as he chooses to give us. For instance: Do you believe he went home and to bed a little after ten? I don't. It's too good. He was establishing an alibi. Why? What was there to prevent his putting out the lights and going out again? Nothing. Something happened long after ten and Porter was in it, or witnessed it. Andrew, never mind me, or my opinions, but it's a matter of life and death to watch the time."

CHAPTER XV

THE afternoon was hot and thundery. Juliet, who hated thunder, quivered as it rolled over the roof and the lightning cut sharply through the dim room for, although the electric lights were turned on, so dark were the heavens that it seemed dusk within the courtroom.

She wished, childishly, that she had made her peace with Bill during the noon recess, because Bill had avoided her, and spent recess with the Drakes. It made Juliet feel rather lonely. Why couldn't Bill leave well enough alone? He was such a wonderful friend. Why couldn't he be content with friendship for a while? She came back, with a start, to the actual scene, and wondered what part Porter had really played in the drama.

Porter's face was clearly illuminated by a high, overhead light. He looked a little fagged from his strenuous morning, and his face was tense as Andrew Dickerson, with a smile and nod toward Terriss, rose to cross-examine. There was a stir in the courtroom. It was not often that so celebrated a stranger rose to speak in this quaint, old-fashioned room, with the portraits of dead and gone judges adorning the walls.

The two men, the witness and the lawyer who was examining him, looked long at each other. Clearly, though not loudly, came Andrew Dickerson's words:

"Porter, were you fond of Jenny?"

A quiver passed over the fellow's face. It was the last question he had expected to be asked. He did not answer at once. He stared at the man who asked the question. Andrew Dickerson waited.

Quick to realize the witness' dilemma for, evidently, the man did not want to answer, Manning was on his feet protesting that this was not proper cross-examination, but the Court, on listening to Dickerson's courteous explanation that he wanted to get the witness' attitude toward the girl, saw no reason why he should not answer the question.

Again, Andrew Dickerson's clear-cut voice, in a perfectly quiet tone, with nothing menacing in it, and yet, a curious quality that seemed to demand of the witness, the whole truth, asked: "Porter, did you like Jenny?"

Sullenly the man stared, his eyes fixed on Dickerson, and his odd, handsome, heavy face darkened by some emotion that it was hard for Juliet Jackson to analyze. Was it remorse or remembrance, tinged with fear? It seemed to dawn upon him that he must answer soon, or make the fact that he hesitated, apparent.

"I—Why, of course, I liked Jenny. We were neighbours."

"You liked her better than you did Blaine Weaver?"

Porter's face darkened. "None of Jenny's friends liked Blaine much, after she married him."

Blaine Weaver lifted his head and looked at the witness. There was a sneer on his face. Their glances met, and Porter looked away.

"When you left Jenny with him that night, did you not fear for her?"

Porter hesitated, and once more Manning came to his rescue. "Your Honour, the question is objected to as irrelevant, incompetent and not proper cross-examination. The witness' thoughts are not part of this case."

Andrew Dickerson waited courteously for him to finish and then turned to the judge. "Will the Court be pleased to consider that he let the woman go back

alone. Under the circumstances, the reason why he did not go back with her is relevant."

They argued for a little while. Porter sat watching them, apparently trying to make up his mind what they were talking about, and then, once more, Andrew Dickerson put his question:

"Did you not fear for Jenny that night, when you let her go back to those two men who were fighting, alone?"

"No, I didn't really think anything would happen to Jenny. I thought she stood a better chance alone than if I tried mixing in with those two, fighting like they was."

"Then, despite the fact that none of Jenny's friends liked the way Blaine Weaver treated her, you went home and to bed, knowing that Weaver was fighting mad, and that Jenny might feel his anger, after Tony Drake finished with him."

"Or he finished Tony," said Porter. "One was as likely to happen as the other, and anyway, neither of 'em wanted me around."

Andrew Dickerson surveyed his witness keenly. "Neither of them liked you?"

"No, by God, not when Jenny was around," declared Porter, before his own lawyer could stop him, and without apparently realizing what he had admitted.

Dickerson smiled. "They were both jealous of you?"

Porter smiled back at him, his conceit making the smile fatuous. "Somethin' like that," he said.

Terriss glanced apprehensively at Dickerson. He was a great man but, Good Heavens, what was he doing with this case!

Juliet saw Ma Codey put her hand on her daughter Rhody's silk-clad knee and whisper something to her. Rhody sank sullenly back in her chair and played with

the snap of her pocketbook. Porter glanced toward her and the smile on his face died out.

"Then you were as much afraid of Tony Drake as of Blaine Weaver?" said Andrew Dickerson, quietly.

"I wan't afraid of either of them, but I know when I'm not wanted."

Andrew Dickerson didn't seem to notice the impertinence of the witness' tone and look. He leaned a little over the table, ignoring Terriss' eye and Tony Drake's fixed gaze.

"Porter, was it the clock, or your watch that you looked at when you got home that night?"

"The clock. The clock in the kitchen."

"And it was—What time did you say it was by the kitchen clock?"

"About ten, just about ten. I can't seem to remember whether it was five minutes after, or five minutes before."

"But you are sure it was either five minutes after, or five minutes before ten o'clock. Why are you sure?"

"Because I looked at the clock when I lit the lamp, before I called in to Ma."

Dickerson nodded. "Five minutes before, or five minutes after ten. How long does it take you, usually, to get from that boarding house—from Harbor Hall, to your house in your car?"

"Well, about twenty minutes, at the most."

"You say it was half-past nine, when you saw Jenny first at the boarding house with her husband and, though you stopped long enough to be in at the beginning of the fight with Blaine Weaver and Tony Drake and afterward stopped the car to let Jenny out, and afterward watched her run back toward the wood, yet you still say it was five minutes of ten when you got back to your own house?"

"Yep, five of, or five after."

"That's a difference of maybe ten minutes. Are you sure it was not later than that?"

"No later."

"And you went immediately to bed?"

"No, I made me a cup-a-tea, and hollered to Ma Codey and the girls to come over and git some of it."

"And they refused?"

"Yeah."

"How did you know they heard you? Did they answer?"

"Sure they heard me. Ma hollered to cut out the racket, they wanted to sleep, and slammed her winder good and hard."

"And then you went to bed?"

"Then I drank my tea, shut the door, wound the clock, and went to bed."

"Did you speak to your own parents again?"

"Nope, they was asleep. I could hear Pa snoring."

"When you went to wind the clock, what time was it?"

"Twenty-five minutes of eleven."

"Twenty-five minutes of eleven. You are sure of that?"

"Sure, I looked at the clock after I wound it up, and then I went to bed."

"There was no further disturbance that night? No one came there looking for Jenny, and you saw nothing of Blaine Weaver nor Tony Drake?"

"I ain't heard nothing, and I ain't seen nothing. I went to sleep and I didn't know nothin' till morning."

"When did you first hear of Jenny's failure to return to the Harbor Hall?"

"The next day."

"When?"

"About noon time."

"Who spoke to you first?"

"Blaine Weaver."

"How did that happen?"

"I met him on the street, and while we were standing there, Mrs. Hickey who kept the Harbor Hall, passed us and said: 'Where's Jenny?' And Blaine he told her he didn't know any more about that than she did, but he'd brought her there last night."

"Mrs. Hickey didn't know that?"

"Mrs. Hickey said she'd heard his voice, but that Jenny never came in. Then she asked me: 'Has she been to her mother's? Do you know where she is?' And I said: 'No'm, I haven't see her.' And that was all she said, and then me and Blaine moved on down the street."

"Did you ask Blaine where his wife was?"

Porter hesitated. He glanced over toward Blaine and caught his eye. Then he turned to Dickerson and saw his smile.

"The question is, did you ask Blaine Weaver where his wife was?"

"I did."

"What did he tell you?"

"Why, he looked at me kinda funny and said: 'I don't know no more than you do. Where did you leave her?' And I said: 'I left her out the car when we got down the road a piece, as you damn well know. The last I seen her she was running back to stop the fight.' He admitted it was some fight, and said Tony Drake laid him out cold, and when he came to he saw no one, and that the question was where did Tony take her?' I shook my head. 'I dun't believe she went with Tony. He was a mess before I left. He'd one eye closed and his nose bleeding'."

"Did you make any other inquiry after Jenny?"

"Not me, she wasn't my wife. If Blaine was satisfied, why so was I."

"Did you ever ask Tony Drake when he had last seen Jenny Weaver?"

Porter Hallay grinned. "Not me, I didn't want my head knocked off."

"Did you ever speak to Tony Drake about the fight you saw him in?"

"Nope."

"Why not?"

"I seen the wallop he handed Blaine that night."

"Was Tony Drake usually so quarrelsome?"

Porter's grin was ugly. "Well, about Jenny Weaver it seemed he was kinda touchy."

"Why do you say that?"

"Well, week after Jenny disappeared he laid Blaine out cold again, down at the post office. Some one asked Blaine if they was any news from his wife yet, and Blaine said: 'Why dun't you ask Tony Drake? He likely knows more about her than I do, since he's lately been to Portland!' Tony knocked him down and told him to keep his dirty mouth shut!"

"Before or after Mrs. Codey heard from Jenny?"

"Before."

"Did she show you those letters?"

Porter grinned. "Yeah. I brought them to her from the post office."

"Did Mrs. Codey show them to Blaine?"

"The next day he came up and asked her if she heard from Jen yet, and she said she had, and give him the letters to read."

"Did Tony Drake know about those letters? Please confine yourself to what was done, not what was said."

"Why, yes. Next day, down to the post office when Tony Drake came for the mail, Blaine Weaver offered him an apology. Jen's Ma had heard from her, and she was in Boston."

"What did Tony Drake do then?"

"He was with Jane Stover, with Miss Stover, I mean—and he didn't turn his head, he just looked at Weaver and growled over his shoulder: 'I've told you not to speak to me, Blaine Weaver, and I mean it. Dun't ever speak to me again.' Blaine he kinda laughed and looked at the other people in the post office and called out: 'There'll come a day when you'll speak to me first and be damned glad if I'll answer you.' Tony, he walked on with the girl, and he never turned his head, nor answered him."

"You really do not know then, whether Jenny Weaver went with Tony Drake, or went back to the main road as her husband hinted?"

"The last I saw Jenny alive, was when she left the car and went running up the road."

"How long did you watch her running?"

"Oh, maybe a minute. I seen she was headed for them. There wan't anybody on the road, so I thought she was all right and went home."

"You've never seen Jenny Weaver alive since that day?"

"No, sir."

"Cross-examination closed," said Mr. Dickerson, pleasantly, "but I wish to reserve the right to recall this witness for recross-examination, when I have corroborated certain information."

Mr. Manning, evidently a little astonished that Porter had come so lightly off, called his next witness, the handwriting expert. Clarges' evidence was, to Juliet, although she had heard him before in other cases, fascinating. His reasonings were always sound, and his conclusions, though sometimes amazing, had almost invariably been proved to be the actual facts.

He took the letters one by one and, comparing them with a letter of Jenny Weaver's, proven to be hers, and

showed, beyond a doubt, that the letters signed in her name, had not been written by Jenny, herself.

Clarges then proceeded, with very slight help from Manning, to prove that these letters, not having been written by Jenny, were quite obviously written by someone who had sufficient cunning not only to disguise his handwriting, but to "write down" below his native knowledge and intelligence, so that they might seem such as Jenny might write.

Clarges showed them, little by little, what he meant. He took up a specimen of Tony Drake's handwriting, and showed conclusively that these letters were not his. There was some excitement evidenced at this testimony, but without allowing its full expression he hurried on to show, by means of an authentic specimen of Blaine Weaver's handwriting, a strong likeness, both in the way Weaver formed his sentences and formed his letters. He declared, however, that the three letters were not, in his opinion, entirely the work of Blaine Weaver. With the aid of a specimen of Alonzo True's writing, he proved to his own satisfaction, and that of most of his audience, that, except for the first two sentences in the first letters, they were written first by Alonzo True, traced partially, and then written over by Blaine Weaver. Weaver, himself, had written the first sentence in exhibit C^2, or the second letter, and the first two sentences in exhibit C^3, or the third letter. The rest of the sentences in exhibits C^1, C^2 and C^3 were all written by True, and then rewritten by Weaver.

The testimony was a sensation. Andrew Dickerson, with a nod to Weaver's lawyer, rose to cross-examine. It was quite evident that his own client, Tony Drake, was secure, Dickerson was intent only on making the conclusion arrived at by the expert show Tony's lack of connection with these letters. He, however, was careful in Blaine's interest to make it also plain that the

handwriting expert had testified that they were not Blaine's work alone, but a collaboration between Blaine and True.

Manning, while evidently not over-pleased with the result, took care to fasten these letters as firmly as he could upon Blaine and to intimate that True's connection with them was an evidence of the fact that he was trying to cover up traces for Tony Drake.

The prosecution called several other witnesses who testified to the effect that Jenny had been at the carnival, that she had not been seen since that night, July 7th, 1927, and that it was known she had worn a dress, made of the material found with the bones, that day. They also testified to the fact that Jenny, in that dress, had been seen at the carnival with Blaine Weaver but, so far, none of the witnesses, save Porter Hallay, had seen her with Tony Drake.

While the courtroom waited in suspense as to what use was to be made of the handwriting expert's testimony, Manning called the next witness.

Alonzo True carried himself superbly. He had on a blue suit with a double-breasted coat that made him look more like a sailor than a butler.

Mrs. Drake leaned forward, clutching the table near her, with one hand, when she heard his name mentioned, but Lowell Drake, who had been so interested that he had forgotten his rôle of step-father, sat back, scowling. "Never could stand that fellow," he muttered under his breath.

Whatever he knew, Lon True looked perfectly capable of keeping it to himself. His mouth was firm and his chin thrust forward a little aggressively, yet the man's attitude was not defiant, it was quiet, contained and courteous. Juliet found herself wondering why this man had chosen to serve as butler. He was clever. She remembered how she had, from the first, distrusted

him, yet, in all this time, she had found nothing to confirm that distrust.

Clearly and distinctly, he gave the information that his name was Alonzo Burton True, that he had been born at West Lost and that he was thirty-two; then Manning, hoping inwardly the brute would never know how nervous he made him feel, began his direct questioning, by asking how long he had been a butler at Drake House.

"About seven years."

"And, during this time, while Mr. and Mrs. Drake were away, you practically managed the estate?"

"Practically. I took my orders from Mrs. Drake, but she left me a free hand for details."

"And, during those seven years, Anthony Drake practically lived at Drake House when he came home from school?"

"Yes, sir."

"Whether his mother and step-father were there or not?"

"Yes, sir. Mr. Tony, as we call him, has always loved Drake House more than any other place belonging to his mother or step-father."

"Was he always given the choice as to where he could stay?"

"That I can't say, sir. Mrs. Drake never confided that to me, sir."

Andrew Dickerson leisurely called his opponent's attention to the fact that this was not direct examination. They were here to hear what this man knew, not what he surmised Mrs. Drake knew.

Manning, having been instructed to withdraw the question, or reframe it, said: "The fact remains, True, that during the formative years of this boy's life you were, practically, in charge of him and the only adviser the boy had, were you not?"

"On the spot, yes, sir, you might say that. Not that Mr. Tony ever confided in me, to any extent, or asked for advice, or when he got it—took it."

There was a distinct ripple of subdued laughter in the courtroom, and Mrs. Drake closed her eyes. Her face was very white. Her husband glanced at her curiously, wondering, for the first time in his careless life, if she had played square with the boy. Tony leaned forward, his eyes on True. There was something almost menacing in that steady regard. Impulsively, Lowell Drake leaned toward Tony and put his hand on his shoulder. The boy stared up at him with a quick flush, and then smiled as though to say: "Don't mind me, I'm all right."

Again something about him reminded Lowell Drake of the small boy to whom he had been carelessly kind, as he might have been to a clumsy puppy, or a very frolicsome, and consequently very boring, kitten. Had the sport he had been so intent on then, been worth the thrusting aside of that young thing, who might have been troublesomely affectionate, but who would have given a key that he lacked now, to this strange young man. How could he help Tony now, when he had not the first idea how to begin?

Something like that must have passed through Tony's mind too, for, unconsciously, he drew back a little and, once more, concentrated his whole attention on Lon True.

True's answers were precise and sharp-cut, as he told of Jenny Weaver's employment at Drake House, and admitted that he had finally discharged her. The reason he gave was that Blaine Weaver's visits were too frequent and too noisy and, furthermore, that Jenny grew careless and sulky. In fact, he admitted, on questioning, that he, himself, would have got rid of her long ago, if it had not been for Mr. Tony Drake's insistence that she be given another chance.

"Do you mean to infer that Mr. Tony Drake took more interest in Jenny Weaver than in the other maids employed at the house?"

"I'm not inferring anything," said Lon True calmly. "I'll say right out that he did take more interest in Jenny Weaver than in the other women at the house."

"Why?"

"Well, I thought, and I still think that it was because Jenny was the nicest and the prettiest woman there at the time."

"That was the apparent reason?"

"I don't know of any other."

Objected to by Mr. Dickerson as irrelevant and not direct examination, Mr. True's inferences were not testimony. After a wrangle the Court noted the objection and allowed the question.

"In what way was this interest manifested?"

"Well, Mr. Tony was always about when Jenny was working at the front of the house. He often gave her a lift down town in his car, and sometimes he took her to her mother's. On her afternoons off, he'd take her out in his boat to the cove near the Weaver house so, as he said, she could land and walk across to her mother-in-law's where her husband was staying."

"Is that all you know?"

Lon True nodded as though to say it was enough and then added the most damning part of his evidence. "Well, he used to give her money."

"How do you know that?"

"The girl told me so. I don't know how much."

There were glances exchanged all over the courtroom and Jane Stover, beside her mother, raised her head defiantly and stared down the looks directed at her.

As for Tony Drake, he gazed directly at the witness without changing his expression, although the blood

mounted to his cheeks as he heard the audible murmur run through the courtroom.

"Where did Mr. Drake get this money? If you know."

"I suppose it was part of his allowance."

"Allowance from his mother?"

"Yes."

"How did this allowance reach him?"

"His mother mailed him a check every month. At least, it was due him every month, but sometimes she forgot to send it, and then Mr. Tony would draw against the house account, through me."

"That is how you came to know of the allowance?"

"Oh no, Mrs. Drake told me about it when I first came there and Mr. Tony was at Prep. school. She authorized me to pay him up to a certain amount in case she forgot to send the cheque."

"I presume the amount was increased after he left school?"

"No, sir, I don't think it was. As far as I know, at least, it wasn't. Mrs. Drake never authorized me to pay Mr. Tony more than the amount she named at first."

"Which was?"

Again Andrew Dickerson objected and again the question was allowed, as showing the amount of money Tony Drake had to bestow on such serving maids as took his fancy.

"Mrs. Drake told me seven years ago that Mr. Tony's allowance was twenty-five dollars a month and, as far as I know, it has never been increased."

There was a gasp, audible in the courtroom. Tony Drake, who was heir to dear knows how much, and all he had was twenty-five dollars a month! Why the meanest day labourer had more than that! You couldn't hire a "hand," no matter how green, for less than forty.

CHAPTER XVI

LOWELL DRAKE had been one of those who gasped. He looked at his wife, his face crimson; but she was not looking at him. She was twisting her handkerchief in her fingers and looking down at the floor.

How incredibly mean it sounded! It had seemed right that she should take Tony's income from the estate and use it for herself and Lowell as long as Tony was under age. According to his grandfather's will, the money was not Tony's until he was twenty-five.

Lowell had never asked where the money came from as long as it was there to spend. He had spent that money as royally on yachts, and planes, horses and cars, as she had on beauty doctors and clothes. Was he going to turn against her now?

Black words rose to Lowell Drake's lips and died before they were spoken. This woman—this woman beside him, his wife, had been small and mean. No wonder this boy, on trial for his life, had stooped to cheap pleasures. They were all that were within his reach. Small wonder he had stayed, season after season, down here rather than accompany his mother, rather than be reduced to begging money for tips, for the expenses that were part of the life of a young man of his age and his social standing. Vividly, Lowell remembered how he had spent money at Tony's age. He remembered the allowance his father had given him, which he had loudly declared inadequate. It had been princely compared with twenty-five dollars a month!

He twisted in his chair and pulled his coat lapels

straight. Out there, in the courtroom, they would be classing him with Milly. They would be thinking and, after all, justly, that it was because of his youthful step-father's extravagant tastes that the boy had been kept so short but, by God, it wasn't with his knowledge! When he married Milly, he fancied himself in love with her. He thought her a much-wronged and misunderstood woman. He had got bravely over all that, and had arrived at the philosophic period where he took what he found and said nothing about it, but he had not married Milly for her money, nor had he ever asked her for a cent. She had proposed that they do thus and so, and had always found the money to do it. He had used his own income, for his own personal expenses.

And it wasn't only the people out there, right here beside him, Bill Davis, and Dickerson, his own kind, were trying not to meet his eye—and Tony! What must this boy be thinking. He wanted to go to him and say: "Tony, I didn't know," but what would that make of Milly?

For the first time, Lowell Drake looked directly at his wife and saw her for what she was. He turned his eyes away and looked at the ceiling, and then remembered that he was facing a court full of critics and they must not know what he thought or felt. He drew his chair a little closer to her and smiled. It was a queer smile, but still, it was a smile. He managed to crowd her so that she might screen herself from the courtroom a little. She glanced at him gratefully and sat back, her hand over her eyes.

Meanwhile, Lon True had gone on to explain that this amount had not included Tony's clothes or travelling expenses. It was simply his spending money. He was quite conscious of what the courtroom was thinking; that this was how he had got his hold on Tony Drake. Well, he did not in the least mind what they thought.

Exhibitionist was Andrew Dickerson's thought, as he listened, occasionally putting in an objection at the proper time to jerk Manning away from dangerous questions. Here was a difficult subject for cross-examination. An audience was meat and drink to True. He wanted to be looked at, to be discussed, to be chief in the eyes and ears of those about him.

What was his vulnerable point? Andrew Dickerson and Juliet, the ferret uppermost in her nature, watched him relentlessly for that, but so far, he had shown nothing that they could seize upon as a vantage point, upon which to train their heavy guns. Manning sensed this, and could not help feeling elated. After all, mere county attorney he might be, but he was making Andrew Dickerson think furiously, and it was on the lap of the gods that he might defeat Dickerson's plans, if he could keep his witness at his present level.

Then, quite by accident, he asked the question that was to open, to Andrew's quick mind, a door: "Where were you the night of July 7th, 1927?" he asked the confident witness.

For the first time, Lon True took time in answering. "That's a difficult question. I went several places that night."

"Tell us all the places you visited after dinner that night, and where you dined."

"I dined in my pantry at home, at Drake House, about seven-thirty and from there I went to the firemen's carnival at Lost. I walked—I walked there, and visited several of the booths and amusements, but about nine, or nine-thirty, I got tired of the carnival and started home by the Harbor Road."

"Did you pass Harbor Hall?"

"No, not directly in front of it. I crossed the street on the north side of it."

"Had you seen Jenny Weaver, or her husband, Blaine Weaver, or Tony Drake, at the carnival?"

"All three of them."

"Were you alone when you left the carnival and when you crossed the road at one side of the Harbor Hall—going where?"

"I was going along Harbor Road, that's the main or state road that leads to the Sandy Road and then to the wood road through the Drake place. I was alone, and I left the carnival alone."

"Did you see Jenny Weaver and her husband in front of the house called Harbor Hall?"

"No, they had just moved away."

"How do you know that?"

"I saw the team going along the road toward the wood road, in the same direction I was taking, but I took a short-cut from the road through some vacant lots, that brought me out nearer the junction between Sandy Road and the main road."

"You mean?"

"I mean, while the team would have to keep to the main, or Harbor Road until it came to Sandy Road, I could go across the fields belonging to the lumber yard, and come out at Sandy Road."

"I see. The cross-cut that you took would not accommodate a wagon or a car?"

"No, sir, just a footpath."

"Did you see Porter Hallay?"

Lon True hesitated. "Yes, I saw him. He was ahead of the team."

"Did you speak to either of them?"

"No. I should have had to holler out pretty loud to make them hear me, on account of the noise Porter's old car was making."

There was a distinct titter from the group of townspeople who composed the witnesses and spectators on

the left of the courtroom. Everybody, evidently, knew about Porter's audible driving. The judge frowned and rapped for order.

"Were you in plain sight of the main road when you crossed the field? That is, were any of them, either in the team or the car, likely to see you?"

"Not likely. They might, of course, but the cross-cut is screened a little from the State and wood roads by some tall bushes and, unless they were looking hard for someone coming along the road, the chances are they wouldn't see me."

"Did you continue along that footpath until you reached the Sandy Road at the junction where the wood road through the Drake place began?"

"I did."

"When you reached the junction and started through the wood road, did you see anything?"

"I did. A car was on the road and the team was drawn up at the entrance to the wood road and I saw two men struggling together, fighting, and one of them was shouting and cursing as he fought."

"Could you recognize them?"

"Not at first but, as I came nearer, I saw that the one who was shouting and cursing was Blaine Weaver and the other was Mr. Drake—Mr. Tony Drake."

"In other words, you saw both the defendants in this case fighting together? Was Jenny Weaver there? Tell us, as briefly as you can, what, and whom, you saw."

"I heard someone call out and I saw a woman running from the road we call Sandy Road, toward the men. It was Jenny Weaver."

"Did you see anyone else there?"

There was so long a pause this time that Manning spoke a little impatiently. "Come, True, you must know whether you saw anything, or anyone else at, or near, where the men were fighting."

True turned his face with its smooth, bland expression, directly toward the prosecutor. "That's just the bother, sir. I hardly know whether to mention it, or not. I may have been mistaken, but I thought I saw a movement further down the wood road—a kind of shadow it was. I heard a little scream, just as Jenny came up the Sandy Road, and it didn't sound like Jenny's screaming, and then the form, or shadow, you might say, was gone."

"Was this form, or shadow, as you call it, a man's or a woman's?"

There was deathly stillness in the courtroom, and Juliet leaned forward, listening, so much depended on what he said.

"It was a woman's, sir, and—and—I scarcely know how to say it, but the reason I called it a shadow is that it was so much like Jenny Weaver, who was coming from an opposite direction that, for a moment, I thought I was seeing her double—or a ghost."

The witness had, indeed, surprised the courtroom. There was the soft sound of intaken breath, like a sigh, all over the place.

Indifferently Andrew Dickerson made some marks, apparently notes, on his pad, but Manning was distinctly annoyed. What the devil did this fellow, with his smooth smirk, mean by bringing in this ghostly business. It was silly and, unless carefully handled, would make Manning ridiculous. They would be laughing in a moment.

He was quite wrong. There was no sound of laughter in the courtroom. The superstitious in the audience were evidently trying to suppress that feeling of chill which had come with True's words: "a ghost."

"As there are no ghosts," said Manning coldly, "confine yourself to actual facts. Did you hear this double of Jenny's move away?"

There was no answer.

"I mean, did you hear any crackling of twigs or underbrush, as though the person made off through the woods?"

"No, sir. The path is thick with pine needles at that place. Indeed, it is carpeted with them all through the woods. There are occasional stones that stick up in the path or road, in one or two places. They are hard and a step on them could be heard."

"You heard nothing?"

"No, sir."

"Were you capable of listening to a footstep when the men were fighting, as you say, noisily, and, at the same time, Jenny was screaming and running toward them?"

"I seemed to be, sir. I was so amazed at seeing what I thought was—well, Jenny at both ends of the road, that I seemed to listen for footsteps to—to kind of reassure me."

"And you didn't hear them?" Manning was determined to ignore any element of the unusual, no matter how determinedly True sought to introduce it.

"No, sir."

There was silence in the courtroom, and Mrs. Codey began to sob.

"Come, come, True," said Manning, brusquely. "You are a practical man, you can't mean to tell us that the shadow you saw at the other end of the path was anything but a real person, or the shadow of some equally real person."

"It was night, sir, and—I've never known what to think."

"Did you hear or see this person—or shadow of such person—any more that night?"

"No, sir." The answer was given after considerable hesitation. It was the sort of answer that invited

further probing; but Manning evidently felt that questioning on that point was time ill-spent. Possibly he felt that Dickerson's chance of turning all this evidence to ridicule, was too great.

This man was only one of his many witnesses, and anything like a ghost or a vision creeping into the evidence now would tend to shake his reputation for credibility, if Dickerson chose to use the opportunity. He was pretty sure Dickerson would. He was only surprised that he had not objected before this.

"What happened afterwards?"

"Why, Jenny came right up to the men and began running around them, trying to stop them from fighting."

"Did you help her?"

"No, sir, I didn't. I was some distance away, about ninety, or a hundred feet, I should say."

"What happened?"

"Why, Jenny put her hand on Blaine's arm and he hauled off and gave her a blow in the face that threw her back off the path under a tree, and Mr. Tony called out something like: 'You damn brute. Look what you've done to the girl!' and made as though he was going to pick up Jenny, but Blaine Weaver hauled off and struck him across the head and Mr. Tony went down like a log on the road."

"What did you do then?"

"Why, I ran toward him and called out to Blaine: 'Do you want to kill him?' And Blaine yelled: 'That's what I'm out to do, if he dun't keep his hands off my woman.' There never was any use arguing with Blaine Weaver when he was drunk or in a temper; so I picked Mr. Tony up. He was kinda stunned. His head had struck a stone, or something, when Blaine knocked him out. So I picked him up and started down the road with him."

"The wood road?"

True shook his head. "No, down Sandy Road. I thought maybe I'd catch Porter's car and get him to take us home."

"What was Blaine Weaver doing?"

"He was kneeling down by Jenny and shaking her, telling her to get up."

"Did you stop to see whether she did or not?"

"No, I had my hands full with Mr. Tony. I kind of slung him over my shoulder the way soldiers are taught to carry wounded men, and started down the road."

"Did Blaine Weaver say anything further to you?"

"No, sir."

"Did you hear Jenny Weaver speak?"

"No, sir."

"Was that the last you saw Jenny Weaver that night?"

"Yes, sir."

"You went away, not knowing whether the woman was dead or alive?"

"Jenny Weaver was used to pretty rough handling. I didn't think she was dead. I had all I could do to get Mr. Tony home, and I felt he was the only one I was responsible for."

"Did you meet Porter Hallay?"

"No, sir. I saw his car parked by the roadside, but Porter I did not see. I came to the conclusion that he had taken one of the short-cuts through the woods, so I went along."

"Did you carry the defendant, Tony Drake, all the way home?"

"No, sir. Just after I passed Porter's car, Mr. Tony spoke and said: 'Why, what's this mean?' And I stopped, and he slid off my back, and stood looking at me kinda groggy and asked me again: 'What you doing here, True?' So I said to him: 'Blaine Weaver knocked

you flat, and I was taking you home.' He swayed from side to side for a moment and then I said: 'That was a bad knock he gave you. Come home and get something to drink and let me fix your head. Let Blaine and Jenny Weaver go home—or to hell. What do you care, anyway?'"

The judge interrupted the witness with a warning that he was not to tell what was said, merely what was done.

"Did he go home with you?"

"No, he stood there swaying for a moment and wiping his face with his handkerchief, then he straightened up and told me that I meant all right, but it wouldn't do, that he had to go back for something, and he turned and walked away, back to the wood road."

"Did you follow him?"

"For a few steps I did, and tried to argue with him, but he wouldn't listen to me, he kept saying: 'I'm afraid Blaine will hurt her.' I called to him: 'Jenny's tough.' But he wouldn't answer me. He just kept muttering: 'I've got to go back!'"

"Did you go back with him?"

"No, I was sick of the whole thing. I wasn't going to be dragged into another dirty quarrel. I couldn't follow Mr. Tony around for ever, like I used to when he was a boy, so I left him. I told him if he had any sense, he'd come home with me. He went back toward the wood road and, when he had gone a few steps, he called to me that he'd join me later, and to have some iodine handy, then he went up the road and I went down the road to the house."

"When did he come home?"

True did not answer at once. "I didn't see him when he came home."

"Do you know when he returned?"

"No, sir, I don't. I sat up or walked about the place until after midnight, and then I went to bed and, in the morning, he came down to breakfast just as usual, except that his eye was black."

"Did he tell you when he returned home?"

"No, sir."

"Did you tell him you had waited for him until late?"

"No, sir. It wouldn't have been any use. Mr. Tony objected to anything like being watched, or looked after."

"Did he ever tell you when he came home?"

"No, sir, not the exact time."

"What, if anything, did he ever say about the time he came home?"

Objected to as hearsay, and not proper direct examination.

The question was reframed by Mr. Manning: "Did Mr. Tony Drake ever tell you, either as an answer to a question by you, or as a voluntary statement, when he came home that night?"

"He told me the next day that he had not used the iodine I had left out for him. He had used some alcohol."

"Was that all he told you?"

"Yes, except that when people began asking where Jenny Weaver was I asked him if he had seen her again that night, he shook his head and told me Blaine and Jenny were not there when he got back. I asked him how he figured that out and he shook his head and said he shouted for Blaine and nobody answered. And then he searched the road through the woods and got home after my light was out. He meant the light in my room. You could see it from the wood road."

Andrew Dickerson rose and objected to this as entirely hearsay evidence. The wrangle over this

occupied some little time and finally the prosecuting attorney was allowed to proceed.

"Given the fact that Mr. Drake arrived at the house when your light went out, how long from the time he left you on the wood road and the time he says he came back to the house, was he gone? As near as you can figure it out. You've often gone from Sandy Road to the Drake place through the woods, haven't you? About how long did it take you, as a rule?"

"Not very long, but I never timed myself. I should say that from the junction of Sandy Road to the spot at the rear of the Drake place, where the old wood road brings you out, why ten minutes if you were running and maybe fifteen or twenty if you were just strolling along."

"Then from the spot on Sandy Road, where Mr. Tony left you, to the spot on the wood road where Blaine and Jenny were and then along the path to the place where your light could be seen, would not take more than twenty minutes, at the most?"

"Oh, I don't know, sir. It might take more than that. It would depend. Mr. Tony was kinda groggy when he left me. It might have taken him longer than it would have taken a man who hadn't been knocked out. Then again, he might have stopped some time at the junction, hollering and looking around for the two of them."

"Even so, an hour and a half seems a much longer time than you would expect, does it not?"

"Under ordinary circumstances, it might, sir," said True, steadily. Everybody in the assembly, with the possible exception of Juliet, Jane and the prisoners' attorneys, were getting the impression that Alonzo True was doing his best for Tony Drake. "But these circumstances were not usual. Mr. Tony was groggy from his fight, and he was looking for two people who weren't there. There's no telling how long that sort of

thing, looking about for people and calling, might have delayed him."

"But the ordinary person, under ordinary circumstances could have covered the distance within—well half an hour, could he not?"

"Well, half an hour would be an ordinary allowance, provided you weren't looking for anyone."

"When did you first hear about Jenny Weaver's disappearance?"

The transition from the last question was so abrupt that Alonzo True was puzzled.

"When did I first hear?"

"When were you first told that Jenny Weaver had disappeared?"

"I don't know as I got it that way. I heard the next morning that Jenny hadn't gone back to Harbor Hall and then, later on, when Mrs. Codey got the letters, I heard that Jenny was in Portland and then in Boston."

"Did you believe it?"

Alonzo True stared. "Of course I believed it."

"How long did you believe this tale of Jenny being off in Portland or in Boston, with an actor, and earning her living on the stage?"

"Until the skeleton, and the rags of clothes were found."

"When you felt sure that these bones and rags of clothes were all that were left of Jenny Weaver what did you think of the letters that I now show, purporting to be from Jenny to her mother?"

Lon True's eyes narrowed. "That someone had played a damn, dirty trick on me."

"Did you also think you knew who played the trick?"

Lon True stiffened. "Yes."

"You saw the letters at the time they were received by Mrs. Codey?"

Lon True shook his head. "Only heard about them."

"Positive you never saw them until now?"

"Positive."

"Will you look at this exhibit now, which is exhibit C[1], and in view of the testimony given by the expert, tell us if you recognize it?"

True took the letter which was one of those purporting to be written by Jenny to her mother and, for a moment, studied it intently. "Blaine Weaver came to me, shortly after Jenny's disappearance, and asked me to draft a letter for a girl he knew. I wrote him a rough copy, and this is that copy, traced over, and altered by Blaine."

Then Manning, with a gesture, turned over his witness to the defence. The judge, however, interposed, declaring the noon recess, in order that the cross-examination might go on without interruption, once it was started. The session closed with, at least, a little ray of hope for Tony for the letters showed a connection between Alonzo and Blaine Weaver, and there followed the inference, not easily to be set aside, that Alonzo knew more than he had told and that his testimony would not incriminate Tony.

Andrew Dickerson strode out of the courtroom and into the tea house where a table had been reserved for the defendants' counsel.

At the end of a rather silent meal he leaned back in his chair, lit a cigarette and said to Bill Davis: "Is Juliet lunching in the other room, downstairs?"

"I don't know, Andy, but I can soon find out."

Dickerson nodded.

Terriss rose impatiently. "Do you want to go over any points with me, sir, before we open up on this Lon True this afternoon?"

Dickerson detected the undercurrent of annoyance in the man's voice and looked up. "Terriss," and he

flicked the ashes from his cigarette into the dessert plate before him, "we might go over every point discussed again, and yet, the something that this Mrs. Jackson may give us, might escape us. True isn't telling anywhere near what he knows about this case, and yet, to extract just what we want from him doesn't lie along the lines we have mapped out together here. All this morning I've been watching him. He's a hard customer. He doesn't want us to know the truth and he's pretty sure he can keep it from us. He's playing both sides. Do you know, Terriss, he gives me the impression he did not give a rap what was asked him, except about the shadow and the letters. When he spoke about that shadow it was by accident because the picture came so clearly before him. He went a little further than he meant to but, when he saw those letters, he was shaken, and remember, it was Mrs. Jackson who brought us the other three letters on which the whole case may hang."

Terriss looked up at him in surprise.

"True was shaken but he didn't let it affect what he was going to say," Dickerson continued. "He had made up his mind to that before he came to the witness stand, but his handwriting recognized, he had to admit it, and he had not meant to mention that shadow."

"I thought the whole shadow business was something he made up to throw us off the track."

"No, he was visualizing the scene and spoke before he thought. It made Tony Drake uncommonly nervous. I don't know how, or where, it will lead us, but it has got to be followed up and, as for the letters—Ah, Juliet," he said as she entered with Bill Davis. "Have you finished your luncheon?"

"Half an hour ago. Andy—did you believe Alonzo True, when he said he went home and sat up till after midnight?"

"Why not?"

"He's leaving a big gap—between ten and after midnight. Andy, watch the time! I have been having a mighty interesting conversation with a farmer who said that he saw Porter Hallay and Blaine Weaver coming down the Sandy Road from the main road early the next morning together, in Hallay's car, and Jenny was not with them."

"Did you get this information voluntarily or——"

"No, I dug it out, together with the information that half the clocks in this town were on Daylight Saving time and half on what they call Local Time, or Old Time, in July, three years ago, and I know that all the clocks in Blaine Weaver's house are on Local, or Old Time."

"Every one?"

"Every blessed one of them."

"Have you told anyone else this interesting item?"

"I have not. I reserved it for you. I found it out some time ago, but I didn't realize how important it was, until this morning. If it holds, where is Blaine Weaver's alibi, or Alonzo True's?"

"Keep still, Judy! Let me think what it does, don't tell me!"

By and by he stretched himself and said: "Those letters that you bought from the Codey girl, I may want to put at least one of them in evidence and I don't want to put you on the stand to prove them."

Juliet nodded. "Don't! Call the county attorney to the side bar and I think he'll let them through without calling me. I let him have them, you know, when the expert wanted them."

Andrew gave a quick look toward Terriss. "I may only use one of them now, Judy. I'll use the others later. Meanwhile, I wish you'd do a little ferretting for

me. I very much want to know what that shadow was."

Juliet looked at him steadily.

"It got you too? He was telling more than he knew then, my girl, he didn't mean to get so definite about the shadow. And did you see Tony's face?"

"No, I was too busy watching Mrs. Drake's."

"Yes? How did she look?"

"Frightened. Very much frightened."

"Yes, and why? There is something much more damning coming, and I dread it."

CHAPTER XVII

THE opening of the afternoon session was delayed for a short time, while the judge received a long distance telephone message concerning his youngest son, who was seriously ill.

While they waited, Juliet studied the testimony and her notes.

A court attendant came to her and spoke.

She jumped up, sent her papers flying, absent-mindedly thanked the young reporter who rescued them, and went hurriedly out of the courtroom.

Bill Davis met her on the steps. "Judy," Bill began, rather apologetically, "I don't want to butt in but I've just remembered, when I first came down here, overhearing Tony say to True: 'There was a buckle. What did you do with the buckle you found the next day?' Then he shut up when he saw me and now when I ask him he says I'm crazy. He doesn't know what I'm talking about."

"A buckle! On Jenny's dress?"

"I thought so, but I don't know whether to tell Andy or not. Maybe I am crazy and didn't really hear it."

Just before the judge entered, a court attendant handed a note across the table to Dickerson who read it and stuffed it in his pocket without changing his expression. Yet it made him alter his plans for cross-examination, for it said: "Go lightly on the shadow, but try to find out, without making it seem too important, what woman would be likely to suggest Jenny Weaver in height and build. Remember, when you ask, the dress Jenny Weaver was wearing, and ask Lon

True about a silver buckle he found on the wood road the next morning. Judy."

Lon True resumed his seat in the witness stand. He came to it decorously, and yet, to Andrew Dickerson, there was all the effect of a swagger in the way he faced the courtroom. "Here am I," he seemed to say to his friends and neighbours, "and no New York lawyer will catch me out. I am equal to my task. Watch me."

Juliet Jackson, who had returned, watched him. She might not like Lon True, but he was a fine figure of a man, and she felt that behind the swagger was a determination that Tony Drake's lawyers would find it hard to break.

Manning had been clever. He had deliberately taken the risk of placing Drake's butler on the stand against the Drake son and heir and, though his testimony had not been directly against Tony, he had not helped him. Openly for his employers he was working hard for some purpose, and that purpose was not so much a desire to save Tony Drake, as a desire to protect someone else and, who that someone else was, Juliet did not yet know.

She looked over at Tony. His mother and his stepfather sat beside him, Bill Davis at the other side, but Tony was not looking at them, nor yet at Jane Stover. His eyes were fixed on a square of blue sky, seen from a side window. He had given one glance at Lon True as he sat down and then looked away. Juliet watched Andrew Dickerson rise slowly. She held her hands tightly clasped. Was he going to let the Drake's butler go lightly away, as a dangerous man to cross-examine, knowing at once too much about the Drakes and telling too little about himself?

If Dickerson looked on True as a dangerous witness, he did not show it. He went carefully through the first preliminary questions and then, to Juliet's surprise,

asked: "True, you knew Jenny Weaver well, did you not?"

"She worked in the house as maid, off and on for two years, sir."

"Oh yes, I know, but a woman might do that, and still you might not know her well. But you were brought up with the Codey girls, were you not?"

"I lived near them when I was young," agreed True, warily. The Codeys were riff-raff. What did Dickerson mean by this question?

"But, even when you moved away, you used to see Jenny quite often, did you not? It was because you knew her pretty well that you gave her a chance?"

"Yes, sir—I thought——"

"Never mind what you thought, True, we're dealing with facts. Now, is it a fact that, before Jenny Weaver married Blaine Weaver, you had asked her to marry you?"

True's face flushed. He was angry. "No, sir. I knew Jenny and liked her, but I never asked her to marry me."

Dickerson bent down to look at the paper in his hand and to keep the smile from coming to his lips. Ah, he had it now! Thought he was far above the girl. That was it. Now he knew something about True. He knew one of his vulnerable spots.

"Jenny bore you no ill-will, then, True, when she married Blaine?"

"I don't understand, sir."

"Since you wouldn't marry her, was Jenny perfectly willing to be dropped, set aside, after all the attentions you had been showering on her for a time—candy, clothes, cigarettes, dances and suppers—despite the fact that she was not the girl you meant to marry?"

"I don't understand, sir."

"I think you do, True. Do you think that the brief

whirl you gave Jenny Weaver here, as well as the times you took her to Portland in the Drake power boat, are hidden mysteries to counsel on either side?"

Quickly Manning objected to this testimony as not proper cross-examination, as irrelevant and immaterial and, as quickly, Dickerson reminded the Court that True had been examined as to the fact that he knew Jenny Weaver well. This was merely continuing the examination along that line, to prove that their relations had not been so friendly after she married Blaine Weaver, and again not so friendly when she left the Drake household.

The objection was overruled and True directed to reply. He was ruffled, Dickerson knew, and Juliet hoped, but he tried to control his anger and present to the courtroom and to Andrew Dickerson, his calm air of the imperturbable Drake House butler.

"I hadn't been in Lost for some time, sir, when I hired Jenny. I didn't know her reputation until—I didn't know the things they were saying about the girl, all over the town, until after I had engaged her."

There was a sudden rustle among the Codey family and the other witnesses. What did Lon True mean by this?

"Ah, then, you admit it was for that reason Jenny was dismissed?"

"Yes, sir, on Mr. Tony's account, being so young I thought that——"

"We will leave Tony Drake out of your answer, True, and we don't want to know what you thought, but what you did. You dismissed Jenny Weaver because she was not the kind of girl to have in Drake House."

"Yes, sir, on account of——"

"Yes, is answer enough, True. Was her husband troublesome over this dismissal?"

"No, sir, on account of it being that he was so noisy and so frequent in his visits."

"Isn't it a fact, True, that Blaine Weaver asked you, as a special favour to him, to dismiss his wife, and that Mr. Tony Drake, distressed because of the girl's hard life with her husband, asked you to keep her a little longer?"

"I thought——"

"No thoughts, True, valuable though they may be. We want the facts. Did, or did not, Blaine Weaver say, or intimate to you that he would like his wife dismissed so that she would be compelled to return to him, and did, or did not, Mr. Tony Drake ask you to keep her at the house and so afford the girl a refuge?"

True's forehead was suddenly beaded with sweat. "It is true that Weaver wanted me to let her go, and Mr. Tony did say that he thought I ought to keep the girl there, but it was on his account——"

"That will do, True. Now," as True wiped his brow and turned resolutely away from the Codey group, "who, in Lost Harbor, looked enough like Jenny Weaver to be mistaken for her at a slight distance?"

True stared at him without speaking, for a moment.

Then Juliet had been right.

"I—I don't understand."

"Read the question, although it seems simple enough," Dickerson said to the stenographer.

The stenographer read the question, and Manning promptly objected. The objection being dismissed, True was directed to answer.

"I don't know of anyone."

"Are you quite sure, True?" Dickerson was disappointed. He had hoped to surprise something out of him, but the fellow was clever as well as afraid.

"Quite sure, sir."

"Then when you saw this shape, or shadow, at the

opposite end of the road from Jenny Weaver, when Tony Drake and Blaine were fighting, who did you first think it was?"

But True was ready for him. "I didn't think it was anybody, sir, I thought I was 'seeing things.'"

"You mean to tell me, here in broad daylight, that you, a sensible, practical man, thought you were seeing a spirit or vision?"

"Not exactly, sir." True was evidently discomposed by the barely perceptible smile of amusement that ran through the courtroom. "But I just thought that it was some kind of delusion, that my vision wasn't clear."

"Had you been drinking at the carnival?"

"No, sir." True was indignant. "Maine's dry, sir."

"Of course," Andrew Dickerson agreed. "Then if you hadn't been drinking, and didn't think it was a spirit, caused by spiritous liquor, what did you think it was?"

True, inwardly cursing himself for having made the slip of mentioning it, though he had thought it clever at the time, hesitated. "It's hard to put it in words, sir. You know how, sometimes, a branch or a tree in the woods, especially in the half light, will look like—like a person."

"Yes," said Andrew Dickerson, gravely. "I know what you mean. It is often most misleading. But, since you knew Jenny was at the other end of the road, what person, of your acquaintance, did this vision or tree shape, or shadow suggest?"

"Jenny, as I said, sir."

"But you knew that Jenny was entering the road at the other end. Think, True, what solution first flashed across your mind?"

"No solution, sir. I simply thought that I had been

misled by a shadow when I remembered where Jenny was."

"You didn't think it might be one of her sisters?"

True hesitated. Dickerson had purposely offered him this avenue of escape. Should he take it. He decided he had better not.

"No, sir. Not any of them looked enough like Jenny. None of them as tall as Jenny, and none of them built like Jenny."

"What time was it when you reached the Drake House that night, after vainly trying to persuade Mr. Tony to return?"

"I don't know exactly, sir."

"Why not? By which door did you enter?"

"The front door, sir."

"The front door, well, there's a clock in the front hall, isn't there? A tall, grandfather's clock that keeps good time?"

"Yes, sir."

"Didn't you look at it?"

"Why, I guess I glanced at it, sir, but I didn't particularly charge my mind with it."

"Then you don't remember?"

"Only that it was sometime after ten."

"Sometime after ten? You can't tell us how much, or how little after?"

"No, sir."

"Can you tell us at what time you put your light out?"

"Yes, sir. Sometime, maybe a quarter, after twelve."

"And at that time there was in Drake House?"

"The three maids, the housekeeper, the gardener and myself."

"You are quite sure of that?"

"Yes, sir."

"For how many did you serve breakfast next morning?"

True stared at him, without answering, for a moment, and then said: "I don't remember, sir."

"Try, True, just cast your mind back to the terrible night you had with Mr. Tony fighting and refusing to return home with you, and Jenny Weaver mixing herself up in the fight with Blaine and Mr. Tony, doesn't that recall something to your mind about the breakfast next morning?"

"No, sir."

"Nothing at all, True? Mr. Tony was late, for one thing, wasn't he?"

"I don't know, sir. I was out before Mr. Tony came down."

"You were out, True? I thought you said indirect that breakfast was as usual, except for Mr. Tony's black eye?"

Quickly, True tried to correct the impression he had made. "The housekeeper told me that, sir."

"Oh. Did the housekeeper tell you anything else which you have been retailing to us as personal experience?"

Manning immediately rose to object to this method of cross-examination.

The question dismissed, and Dickerson satisfied that he had shaken the witness, continued: "You say you were out! What were you doing?"

"I can't remember, sir. Probably marketing, or leaving the orders for the day?"

"Did you do the marketing?"

"Well, most of it, sir. I preferred to do it."

"Then can't you remember whether you ordered anything special that might remind you of breakfast that day."

"No, sir."

"When did you get back to the house that day? Immediately after the marketing was done?"

"I really can't say, sir. I don't remember. I presume sometime before noon."

"Sometime before noon?" Dickerson knew now that he had True vainly wondering what he was driving at, also the attorneys on the other side. He could see them getting ready to object. Therefore, he sprung a question that really meant nothing more to him than that he must stall a little to see if it was worth while following this sidetrack, not knowing where it would lead; but to True and others it seemed fraught with meaning.

"Did you dismiss the car that morning after your shopping was done, and send it home with the marketing, after reaching the junction between Sandy Road and the wood road, and walk through the wood road to Drake House?"

There was a silence, and then True said, less readily than usual: "I may have, I don't remember."

"You don't remember? Well, let's try to refresh your memory. On that morning, as you walked through the woods, did you not observe on the path, and did you not stop and pick up, a silver buckle?"

There was deadly stillness in the courtroom. Everybody looked at the witness.

He waited a moment, looking at his questioner with parted lips. "I don't remember, sir."

"Bring your mind to bear on this thing, True, and take your time. I'll repeat the question: On the morning, after the night of the firemen's carnival, which was the night of the fight, and the night when Jenny Weaver was last seen in Lost, that is, July 8th, 1927, did you, or did you not, walk through the woods, and pick up on the path or road through the woods, which led to the Drake House, a silver buckle?"

"I—I don't remember, sir."

"You mean you don't remember walking through there, or that you did not pick up a silver buckle?"

"Not exactly like the one on Jenny's dress, sir."

Juliet Jackson fumbled with her pencil. It had worked. It had caught and tripped this clever man. Bill had been right. She put the hand that trembled against her lips and watched Andrew Dickerson. Not one lawyer in a thousand would have done what he had done at her suggestion.

"Not like the one on Jenny's dress? You mean not like the buttons in exhibit A^1?"

"Yes, sir. That's what I mean."

"Exhibit A^1 is not a buckle. It is a button. What did you do with the buckle that was not like the button marked exhibit A^1?"

"I put it in my pocket, sir."

"You put it in your pocket? What became of it?"

"I don't know, sir. It was so long ago, I may have thrown it away, I don't know."

"But now you remember finding it?"

"Yes, sir."

"How far from the spot where the skeleton was found, was the spot where you found this buckle?"

There was a pause. Everybody in the courtroom craned forward and, now Manning interposed again to give his witness time to think. His objection was overruled and his witness ordered to speak.

True said, slowly: "I think it was two or three hundred yards from where the body was found, as near as I can recollect, but it is so long ago."

"To the best of your recollection," said Dickerson, with the first sign of impatience he had shown, "and whether it was in the direction of Drake House, or away from that direction?"

"To the best of my recollection, and toward the Drake estate."

"Can you produce that buckle?"

"No, sir. I think the coroner has it."

"Did you give it to the coroner?"

"I went to the coroner's office with Rod and turned it in."

There was tenseness in the courtroom. Manning, his face like a thundercloud, rose to the rescue and complained of this sort of cross-examination, reiterating that no such buckle had been offered in evidence.

After a short but severe battle between counsel, True was dismissed the stand and sent with an officer to the coroner's office for the silver buckle.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE next day began with a drizzle of rain, which presently turned into a steady downpour. The tops of the long line of motor cars glistened as, all the dust of the country roads washed from them, they stood waiting outside the courthouse.

There was gloom in the courtroom, for the light came dimly through the windows. It softened and gave a Rembrandt finish to the picture, in Juliet's eyes, as she came slowly in and looked about her. The damp umbrellas, raincoats and the more subdued colour of the clothes that most of the careful country men and women wore, made the scene much less colourful than the previous sessions.

The gloom created by rain and dull skies seemed to be reflected in the case itself, for it opened drearily, with the coroner on the stand to establish some purely technical matters relating to the finding of the bones, and the length of their exposure.

Followed in quick succession, two of the Codeys who gave evidence mainly that Jenny had disappeared on a certain date, July 7th, 1927; that they had heard nothing from her, save through her husband and through the letters supposed to be from Jenny. Then the letters sold to Juliet were put in evidence.

Juliet, who had been up and about since early dawn, following a clue that had presented itself to her late last night, was tired, but less depressed than the others. The buckle, which had at first seemed trivial to her, just an added complication, had suddenly suggested to her that Rodney Barber might know more than he

had told. Since he was to be recalled, Juliet meant to see that he told it this time. Rodney would have been pleased if he had seen "Miz' Jackson" scurrying about the waterfront and the railroad station that morning. She had not secured all she wanted but enough, she hoped, for Dickerson to use with effect. She sighed with relief, for she had put it into his hands just before entering court.

Dickerson, too, looked tired this morning. His light had burned through the midnight hours and on into daylight, as he tried to puzzle out why True had mentioned the shadow; also why he had gone to such length to involve Tony Drake.

When Juliet had placed in his hands all she had been studying last night and searching for this morning, he had first stared at her impatiently and then at Bill Davis, who had accompanied her, anxious and indignant at the sight of her pale face. If Judy would only listen to reason and leave this sort of thing to the men who were paid to do it. His thoughts were plainly indicated. Andrew read them, sympathized to some degree but, after a moment, laughed.

"We're a weary-looking pair, Judy and I, aren't we, Bill? Wasting the midnight oil, both of us. Still, I think we've got something. Watch the witness who follows the Codey tribe."

Yet Bill knew the witness was to be none other than Rod Barber, recalled to testify concerning the buckle, alleged to have been in True's possession. What could Rod tell them that was new?

Mrs. Drake was at her post, though early this morning she had told Lowell Drake she would not come. She was desperately tired and must have a rest, and she could not see that she was helping Tony at all. She had spoken with soft vehemence. The faint lines about her eyes, her mirror had revealed this morning, had

moved her far more than her son's danger would ever move her. She had counted on Lowell's usual concern and his equally usual: "Don't do a thing, darling, if you don't want to," so she was utterly unprepared for the storm that followed her speech.

She had been used to the quarrelsome methods of Tony's father, which had meant loud shouting and swearing on his part, while she sat huddled up in a corner of the bed or on the chaise lounge, or in a large easy chair, and snarled and whimpered like an angry pet kitten. She would turn her large eyes on him reproachfully, occasionally saying, in a gentle voice, which made it even more emphatic, just what she thought of him, until he threw up his hands and said: "Oh, what's the use? Have it your own way!" Then he would go out and get drunk, or go far from home and Milly for six months or a year.

With Lowell, Milly dared not try these tactics. She knew that the one thing Lowell Drake would not stand was a scene. If she tried that he would only widen his eyes, light a cigarette and go quietly to his own room, locking the door.

It was a method that was admirably suited to the management of Milly Drake. It terrified her. There seemed nothing that she could do; nothing that would reach him; and he was young, and she must be careful, for temper made wrinkles which took more massage to drive away.

At the proposal that she stay away from the Court to-day, Lowell had turned quickly and looked at her. Under that look, Milly felt all the delicately massaged lines on her face show plainly and prominently, while his words cut through her armour of selfish concern, as nothing had ever done before. "You can rest up for a month afterward, if you like, but you will go to Court to-day and sit beside your son and look as

though you had no doubt whatever that he is as innocent as you are or, by God, I'll take you there on a stretcher with a doctor on each side of it feeling your pulse. But you'll go!

"You have done something to that boy of yours, Milly, that can never be undone, but you're going to stand by him, and so am I. God knows, I don't blame him for hating me but, at least, I won't feel such a dirty rotter if he knows that I didn't realize he was kept down here while we were spending his money. You'll be ready when the car comes around."

He had gone out of the room with his hands in his pockets, without a single look back. Milly had thrown herself down on the bed and screamed and cried but he did not come back so, after a few minutes, she got to her feet and rang the bell.

Her maid had been skilful, and her hat was becoming, as Mrs. Drake faced the courtroom, once more. She hated all these people and the whole thing was being badly managed. If Tony had not been so stubborn but had gone, at once, to the Commodore and asked him to take him to England, as she had told him, everything would have blown over.

Rodney Barber, sitting squarely in the witness chair, regarded Mrs. Drake with eyes that took in everything and behind those eyes a brain that wondered what in the world nature was about when it made such a woman a mother. Rod had no illusions about women. He had married one of the worst, and Rod's life with her had been a martyrdom. He had been caught early by a pretty face. He had married the girl quite as much out of pity as for love. She had been left entirely alone in the world by the death of her father, a drunken old sea captain.

Rod, who loved children, had seen his own two pine and die, although he had washed the milk bottles

himself, and watched over them all he could; but he had to work for bread and could not sit at home minding the babies, whose mother was a slut and a slattern. He had talked to Susie, he had sworn at her, he had done everything but lift his hand to her, but it had been of no avail.

When Susie died suddenly, Rod hated his lonely house, but it was clean. He hated his lonely meals, though they were well served and well cooked by an elderly sea captain's widow, but he was afraid of women.

He looked toward Tony Drake and thought that if his own boy had lived he might have been close to Tony's age now. Rod grasped the arms of his chair as he thought of the pride that would have filled him if Tony had been his son, even if fools accused him of murder. He would have fought every man on the jury, tooth and nail, if they dared believe it.

Yet, it was Rod's testimony that was to make things look black for Tony Drake.

"Rod," began the prosecutor, "Alonzo True, in his testimony, spoke of a silver buckle having been found somewhere between the tree under which the skeleton was found, and Drake House. Did you see anything of it, or did you know what was done with the buckle or of its being found?"

"There was a silver brooch with the skeleton and that, with the six silver buttons, was turned over to the coroner, but I saw the buckle two days after the finding of the body."

"What were you told about it, if anything, and when?"

"Why, two days after the bones were found, when the grounds were being photographed, I went up there with the coroner and, after he had gone, I was kinda looking about me, when Lon True came along. He was going toward Drake House. He stopped to speak to

me and I told him all I knew about the finding of the body, and he kinda shook his head over it. There was nobody near us, and he looked about him to see that there was nobody around and then he reached down in his pocket and took out something which he held out toward me and said: 'What do you know about this, Rod?' I looked at it and it was a silver thing, a little larger than the brooch found with the silver buttons and the rags of dress goods. Instead of having a kind of ring to sew on like the buttons, or a pin to fasten it like the brooch, it had wide slits on the under side, one on the right and one on the left, with a bar of silver between and, when I looked at it and handled it, somehow, I got an idea of what it was meant for, and said: 'It's a belt buckle, isn't it?'

"Lon, he kinda looked at me and nodded. I saw it had the same engraved pattern on it that the silver brooch and buttons have. Then he said the buckle fell out of Tony Drake's coat pocket, the day Tony came to look at the bones. True was there, and they went on back to Drake House together. True was in front, but he said he turned to look back and saw Tony take his hand from his pocket and throw this thing out on the grass by the side of the path. True called out to look what was on the edge of the path, and picked it up. He asked me now what to do with it, and I said: 'Better turn it over to the coroner.'"

"Then you believed his story about the buckle coming from Tony Drake's coat pocket?"

As Andrew Dickerson rose to object to this particular method of redirect examination, Rodney Barber, apparently too deeply engrossed in his recollection of the event to notice the attorney for the defence said: "No, sir, I didn't. I judged True was gettin' rid of something he was afraid to keep, but I thought it would be safest with the coroner."

It was more than Dickerson had expected, and he rejoiced inwardly at Rod's downrightness, as he watched the thoroughly annoyed county attorney ask that the witness' answer be stricken out, and he be allowed to reframe his question. There was a twinkle in Andrew's eye, as he sat down, but Rod stared straight before him and seemed not to perceive what he had done.

"Without reference as to whether you believed it or not, what did you do?"

"I saw that he turned the buckle over to the coroner. I went with him."

Mr. Manning then offered the buckle in evidence. Mr. Dickerson strenuously opposed its entrance. However, after a little dispute, it was admitted, as exhibit A[3].

Out of this discussion emerged, at length, the fact that this buckle was similar in design and construction to the buttons and brooch found with Jenny Weaver's old rags.

Having introduced this exhibit, Rod was about to step down when Andrew Dickerson called to him: "When and where did you last see this buckle before you saw it in Lon True's hands?"

"I saw that buckle fastening Jenny's belt on the night of July 7th, about half-past seven, when she was eating an ice-cream cone at the firemen's carnival. I saw the same buckle a little before eleven that night in Ike Vollmer's drug store in a room back of the prescription department, where there was a poker game going on. Blaine Weaver, he came in with Porter Hallay and they tried to horn into the game and, while they were standing there arguing whether they had money enough to play, Tony Drake he came in, just as Blaine Weaver turned his pocket inside out to get some change, and that buckle fell on the floor. Tony looked at it and said to Blaine: 'Did you finish the job?'

"Blaine cursed, and Tony picked the buckle up and put it on the counter before him and Blaine he pushed it toward him and said: 'That what you want?' Tony, he shook his head. Blaine put the buckle back in his pocket, as Tony said: 'I want to see Jenny. Where'd you leave her?' Blaine, he cursed again and pushed Tony out of his way and called to Porter to come along, and they went out of the room together and left Tony standing there and, after a minute, he turned and followed them."

The silence in the courtroom was menacing.

Andrew Dickerson took a little time before he framed the next sentence. "Who was in that room beside yourself, Tony, Blaine and Porter?"

"Half a dozen men."

"Can you name them?"

Rod looked directly at Dickerson. "I could, but I'd a deal rather not. They was drinking and playing, you know."

"I'm afraid you'll have to, this is a court of law."

Rod hesitated. "Well, I hope they won't lay it against me. It ain't my fault they was there: Jake Rantoul, Tom Pawling, Izaac New, Frank Vigori, Bill Betts, Mose Martin and myself, and Vollmer, with Frazee, the drug clerk."

Andrew Dickerson noted them. "And they could hear and see what you saw?"

"They could," said Rod, "but the question is, did they? They were well into that poker game. I had been losing, brother, and quit."

There was a slight snigger in the courtroom, among the spectators. Rod Barber wasn't so awful pious and reformed yet, he still played poker.

"In which direction did the men go?"

"In the direction of Sandy Road. Blaine and Porter together and Tony following."

"Didn't he join them?"

"They wouldn't let him. I could see them forging ahead and, if Tony came near them they shouted to him to mind his own business, shut up, and go home."

"And then?"

"And then I didn't see any more. I shut the door, for I meant to get even with Frank Vigori next round."

"Re-cross-examination closed," said Dickerson.

"No re-re-direct," said Manning, quickly. He didn't want to spoil the effect that his witness had made, and what was Dickerson planning, anyway, that he asked so little about Tony's share in the affair?

Dickerson, seeing perfectly the net that had been spread at his feet, contented himself with nodding to Terriss and they both waited expectantly, but in outward calm, for the prosecution's next witness.

When that witness appeared, it was a distinct shock to the defence, and Andrew Dickerson shot a quick glance at the still, set face of Tony Drake. This man was the telegraph operator in this town, for the railroad did not reach Lost and the railroad station here at the county seat was the station for Lost, too. A bus transferred passengers to Lost Harbor.

The operator testified that his office normally closed at nine o'clock at night, though the last train to Portland left the station at ten-thirty; but in the summer he often found it necessary to work overtime and often helped the freight agent. The night of the firemen's carnival he had not left the station until after ten o'clock. At about ten he saw Tony Drake ride up in his car and help a woman, who looked like Jenny Weaver, on the ten-thirty train, which was made up at this station, and was ready and waiting.

Everybody was puzzled. Why did the prosecution

bring this witness as their own. Surely it would show that Tony had not killed the girl.

The operator went on to say he watched Tony, because of the things that were being said around town about Jenny losing her job at the Drake place, and he saw the Drake motor start up again, and Tony ride away with *the very same woman* sitting beside him. She had evidently refused to leave on the train!

The cross-examination was brief, though severe, and when it had finished, everybody in the courtroom knew that there was a double platform at this station and that it was possible for a passenger to get on an outgoing train and, if there was no incoming train at the same time, to go to the other side of the platform and cross the tracks behind the freight station to the opposite platform where Tony Drake's motor was parked, without much chance of being seen. Nothing that Terriss, who knew this part of the world best, could say shook that. If Tony and Jenny had gone to the station to throw Blaine off the scent, or to give Jenny a chance to get away, it would have been easy for them to be back in Lost Harbor, and Jenny done to death before Tony Drake returned to his home.

As a last resort the operator had been asked if he had seen Tony's black eye, and he had said no, for Tony had his hat dragged down over his eyes; yet he utterly refused to be shaken as to its being Tony Drake. He had known Tony ever since he was a child and there was very little chance of his being mistaken. Beside he knew it was Tony, because he had stood for a moment in the light of the station lamp and he had noticed that he was "kinda messed up as to his clothes, as though he had been kinda tumbling around, and I thought he might be drunk. I noticed he kept putting his handkerchief to his face as though his nose was

bleeding, or something. There was the shadow of his hat across the upper part of his face and he might easy have had a black eye and I wouldn't have seen it."

In curious expectancy the whole courtroom waited for the next witness. It was noticeable that there was none of that peevish, sleepy look that the monotony of reiterated testimony and the air of a badly ventilated courtroom, crowded with people, so often engenders. The jury was alert, as alert as the audience.

Then, to everybody's astonishment, Mrs. Hetty Dark came toward the witness stand. Everybody knew Mrs. Dark. She was the village "practical" nurse, and many preferred her to any trained nurse the doctor sent them, for Mrs. Dark was a born sick nurse with quick, quiet ways, despite her bulk, and fingers that were magically gentle and soothing. She had helped the majority of Lost's population into the world, and many of them out of it. She seemed ageless. As a matter of fact, she was about sixty-eight years old, but so rugged and strong, her heavy black hair with so little grey in it, that she seemed not more than fifty.

She came to the stand with her quick, noiseless step and, having taken the oath seriously, looked about her. After the first preliminaries as to her occupation, etc., Manning, who could not keep out of his manner the hint that this witness was most important, asked her where she was on the 7th of July, 1927, the night of the firemen's carnival.

Mrs. Dark thought a moment, then smiled. "Why, that was the night little Annie Morrell was born. Her mother had been at the carnival in the afternoon, in spite of all her mother-in-law could say, maybe because of it and, of course, she eat some things that didn't agree with her. Well, Annie come tagging along at the tail-end of the evening, two weeks before she ought to of.

Nancy Morrell, that's her mother, never could keep off of a carousal, if there was one going."

A question made it plain that a "carousal" was in fact a merry-go-round. Nancy Morrell had indulged in rides on this and not in a debauch, as Andrew Dickerson had at first feared.

She, Mrs. Dark, had stayed late at the Morrell house, which was on the Harbor Road, or Portland Pike, as Mrs. Dark insisted on calling it, for that had been its old name when she was a girl. The Morrell house was about a mile down this road, away from the Sandy Road. When Mrs. Morrell's husband came home after the baby arrived, Mrs. Dark, who had been sent for in haste, went to see that her own house was in such order that it could be left for some time. She was not afraid of walking along the Sandy Road, indeed, she lived just a little way back from it, but some distance from the junction of this road and the old wood road. Her house was a little old frame house that had been built among the trees years ago before there were any houses, or roads, or anything except cart tracks. Sandy Road led to her front gate.

So, on July 7th, Mrs. Dark, clutching her work bag in one hand and an umbrella in the other for, though it was fair when she started out, you never can tell, can you, started off for home. She saw nothing on Harbor Road, she turned down Sandy Road and there was still no one in sight, but she heard sounds as though there was someone in the woods, sounds as though someone was talking, and she thought she heard a faint scream, but she couldn't be sure.

"Any rate, wan't but just a few steps from the place where the wood road to Drake's came out and joined Sandy Road, when I heard a sound and this time it was right plain. I didn't know, at first," and here Mrs. Dark looked apologetically at the prosecutor, "I didn't

know, at first, but what it might be a drunken man, from the sound, a kind of hiccupy sound, so I stepped accrost the road kinda quick and into the shadow cast by a big pine. I was on the opposite side of the road, and I was in the shadow, but the other people stood in a cleared place of the wood road so that I could see them plainly. It was a man and a woman and the woman was crying hard, and the man was kinda arguing so that I thought they must be quarrelling."

"Could you see these people plain enough to tell who they were?"

"Well, now, of course, I can't say that I saw the woman's face, because it was turned away from me, but I ain't a doubt who she was from her figger and clothes and everything, but the man's face I could see as plain as though it was daylight."

"Well, who was he?"

"It was Tony Drake standing there, talking as loud and as excited as I have ever heard a man talk."

"You say you knew the woman, who was she?"

"I knew her as well as I knew him. I helped bring her into this world and, though I couldn't see her face, it was Jenny Weaver's figger and clothes, and the way she stood, but she had her hands over her face, so I couldn't see it."

"Did you hear what she said?"

"Well, it was kinda mixed up with crying, but it sounded like: 'Oh, don't, Tony, don't! I promise you it's the last time, I promise!'"

"And did you hear what he said?"

"Well, no, not what he replied to her, because, when I found who 'twas, I just wan't going to be found listening to them, so I just crept along in the shadow, so's they wouldn't see me, and I could get out of sight, without their knowing that I saw them."

"Did you hear what he said before you came up to them?"

"Not exactly. I was too scared, thinking it was a drunken man, at first, and he was so mad, his voice sounded kind of chokey."

"What was he saying?"

"'My God, my God, what are we to do?' And then I heard the words 'kill you,' but I don't really know whether he said: 'I'll kill you,' or 'he'll kill you.' I didn't hear so awful plain."

"But you did hear the words: 'kill you'?"

"I did hear the words: 'kill you'."

"And did you see Tony Drake and Jenny Weaver together?"

"Yes, sir, I did."

"And they were the only persons, except yourself, on the wood road, or the Sandy Road, where it joined the wood road, so far as you could see?"

The witness hesitated and then answered firmly: "No, sir."

The prosecuting attorney turned to her and it was plain that he thought the witness had made a mistake. "Did you understand the question, Mrs. Dark? I asked you if these two persons you mentioned, whom you thought to be Tony Drake and Jenny Weaver were the only people on the wood road or that junction where it met Sandy Road. In fact, the only persons in sight were yourself, and these two, were they not?"

"No, sir. I understand the question. You asked me if Jenny and Tony and me were the only people there, the only people I saw. Well, I have to say I saw someone else. There was a man kinda dodging around a tree, near the junction. He ducked down back of the tree and watched them."

"Who was it, if you know?"

"Well, I couldn't see very plainly, at first, but I thought it was Blaine Weaver."

"You thought it was Blaine Weaver? Why?"

"Because it was about his height and it was his clothes and everybody knew he was mean about Jenny and was always following her."

"You say you thought it was Blaine Weaver? Did you leave the place merely thinking so, and go home with that notion, or did you have any proof before you left, that it was Blaine?"

Mrs. Dark nodded slowly. "I know it's a serious thing to say, but it was Blaine. Just as the others got further down the road and so that I could think of going on my way without them being disturbed I saw him straighten up by the tree and the moonlight struck on his face and it was Blaine."

"You are positive?"

Mrs. Dark nodded. "Yes, I am positive."

"About how far was he standing from where you stood—about two hundred yards or more?"

"He was standing near the tree where the body was found."

"What did you do then?"

"Well, I went on down Sandy Road and none of them saw me or turned, and I got home——"

"At about what time?"

"Well, I should say it was about ten o'clock. Somewhere near that, maybe a little after."

"Did you look at the clock?"

"Not then. I did afterwards when I was winding the clock in my bedroom."

"What time did it say then?"

"About ten-ten."

"Was there anyone at the house who could corroborate this statement?"

"Yes, my niece, Minnie Smith, who was staying with me at that time."

"Then your niece, Minnie Smith, was the only other occupant of your house?"

"At that time she was. Yes, sir."

As Andrew Dickerson rose to cross-examine, the room grew darker, but Dickerson did not seem to heed the coming of the thunder storm as he put his first questions to Mrs. Dark. One could see that he liked this nice old woman. She had had a hard life, but she had helped her neighbours in their troubles, as well as borne her own bravely. No one looking on her could help feeling that here was a good soul, a worthy citizen, and one to be treated with respect. Not once did Andrew Dickerson raise his voice yet, though he was considerate, Mrs. Dark felt that she could not escape from him, that he would have the truth from her, no matter what it meant to him or to his client.

"Now, Mrs. Dark," he said, having gone over the preliminaries of her testimony, and finding her unshaken, "we will go back to the time when you first perceived these two people going down the road. You are positive the man was Tony Drake?"

"Yes, sir, I am."

"And you are equally positive that the woman was Jenny Weaver?"

"Yes, sir, I think so, sir."

"But you didn't see her face plainly?"

"No, sir, not as plain as I'm seeing yours, but plain enough for me to be sure that it was Jenny."

"Mrs. Dark, I want you to give me your complete attention. Don't be side-tracked by any feeling that, having once said a thing before the Court, you cannot change your testimony, if you discover that you have made an error. Mrs. Dark, if another woman about Jenny's height had had on a dress such as Jenny wore,

could you not, owing to the state of the light at the time you met these two people, have thought it was Jenny, and honestly so stated, and yet, have been mistaken?"

Manning rose to his feet, roaring out an objection to this as calling on the witness to consider an entirely suppositious case, but in the end, Mrs. Dark answered: "Why, I don't think so, Mr. Dickerson. I don't know any woman in Lost who could wear her clothes just the way Jenny did. Nor any woman in town with just such a kinda bright swing to her head as Jenny had."

"You're positive of that?"

"Yes, sir."

"Mrs. Dark, think hard, for I know you're just as anxious as we are that an innocent man shall not lie under an unjust accusation. If Jenny Weaver had not disappeared that night, if Jenny was here in the court with her mother and sisters and we were still trying Tony for the death of some woman with whom he had been seen that night, Mrs. Dark, what woman whom you know would resemble the woman you saw?"

The witness looked at him shrewdly for a moment and shook her head. "I don't know. Not her sisters. They're all shorter than Jenny, and their colouring is different. No one could mistake her for them. Jenny's figger was one you could hardly mistake. She had a splendid figger. Why, she could even wear Mrs. Lowell Drake's gowns without any alteration, and there ain't another girl in the town could do that, much as they would like to."

"It was one of Mrs. Drake's dresses she had on the night she died, was it not?"

"It was, poor thing. I can't think of anyone in town at that time, that I knew of, that could be mistaken for Jenny. But I can tell you this, that if Mrs. Lowell Drake had been in town then, which she wasn't, I

might have said that Tony Drake was walking with his mother."

There was a little muffled exclamation from Tony, and it was seen that Mrs. Drake had fallen sidewise in her chair, her eyes closed.

"Cross-examination closed," said Mr. Dickerson, hurriedly, as Mrs. Drake was carried, by her husband, into the ante-room.

CHAPTER XIX

IT seemed to Juliet the recess would never end. It was not that she longed for the courtroom, but that she dreaded it, so that every minute seemed like an hour and always at the back of her mind, as she walked about the town alone and thought hard, was something that wanted to be heard.

Bill Davis had not appeared, and Juliet suspected he would not. It was probable that Dickerson had given him the task of reconciling Tony to what was being done by his own lawyers. Poor Bill, she did not envy him his task.

Suddenly she found there was just five minutes more and began to walk briskly back to the courthouse. As she did so she saw Jane Stover. Jane's face was turned away from her, and that face was set in so bitterly sad an expression, that Juliet's heart went out to her. How easy it was to regard a trial, as so many of the spectators did, as a show, an interesting exhibition, forgetting the misery it meant to this poor girl! Yet, Jane must face it out before all her neighbours; all the people who had known her, and known Tony since they were small.

Juliet crossed and greeted her. Jane was quietly civil, that was all. Her mind was too full of her own troubles to be bothered with this woman who should be helping Tony and, apparently, was not. Her mother followed her, and having a longer acquaintance with life, looked at Juliet comprehendingly, and with a kindly smile.

"It was a bad session, but we'll weather it."

"That's the first good word I've had this morning. And I need it, because I know there is something I've missed. Something that, despite Tony, I might use to help him."

Jane's eyes never moved. She looked straight in front of her. But her mother's hand stole out and pressed Juliet's.

"Hetty Dark's an honest soul." She patted Juliet's sleeve softly. "She told what she thought she saw, but she did not see everything. All cats look grey at night, my dear. Another woman who looked like Jenny in figure and height might have been walking down that wood road that night. I kept thinking that a clever woman, and it would take a woman, a man wouldn't think of it, might find out someone who wore clothes like Jenny's, or who looked like her in the dark—and who walked like Jenny——"

"Mother!" Jane interrupted sharply.

Juliet glanced at her and wondered. But that seemed all Jane had to say. It was sufficient for Mrs. Stover. She stopped as a checked child might, and then said guiltily: "Oh, I was only wondering, it doesn't hurt to wonder."

"No," said Juliet. "I've been doing that all morning, yet I haven't—" She stopped suddenly. Something had clicked in her brain. Was it because Mrs. Stover had begun humming that old hymn again?

She nodded to them both and hurried ahead of them into the courtroom and again sent a note to Andrew Dickerson. She could see him read it, but his countenance did not change, nor did he look toward her. He put the note in his pocket and turned to speak to Mrs. Drake, who had returned to the courtroom.

No one, not even her careless young husband, could fail to see that Mrs. Drake was showing the strain of this session. Despite her rouge, her face was ghastly

and her eyes had dark circles about them. But now they could not persuade her to go home.

"No, no," she said, impatiently. "I must stay. I won't leave Tony." Yet, she and Tony seemed to have singularly little to say to each other, and he had been one of the first to urge her to go home.

Bill Davis sat near them, his hand on the arm of Tony's chair. He looked out over the audience seeking Juliet. She nodded and smiled at him with a cheerfulness she did not feel.

The prosecution's next witness was Elezar Ruloff, a night watchman in charge of a lumber yard half way between North and South Lost. It was through the vacant lots, included in their yards, that Alonzo True had made his way to the junction of Sandy Road and the wood road.

Ruloff testified that he had seen Alonzo True cross the lots at the hour given. Questioned further, he stated that he had made an extra round across these vacant lots, much later that night, because he had heard loud voices and quarrelling. This was near midnight, and he had then seen Blaine Weaver go shouting and screaming after Tony Drake down the wood road. He was running after him and shouting at him. Yes, he'd been near enough to see who they were and, anyway, he would have known Blaine from his language alone. The shouts had died down and he saw Blaine, walking round on the road, "like as though he was placed as a sentinel."

Tony stood in the middle of the wood road, but Blaine was off at the right, his back to a tree, being the same one, only smaller then, under which Jenny's body was found.

Blaine was evidently angry at Tony. As they were not on the company's grounds and, as they seemed capable of conducting their own quarrels, he had

turned around and gone back and had heard nothing more.

Juliet wondered what Dickerson would do with this man on cross-examination. He seemed to tell a straight story and, if the object of the prosecuting attorney was to show that Tony and Blaine were together late that night and had time and opportunity to do what had been done, he had certainly accomplished his object.

Dickerson asked the man a few apparently perfunctory questions as to time and casually established the fact that the watchman knew Tony only by sight. He was comparatively a newcomer, but he insisted that, though he didn't know him to speak to, he had seen him hundreds of times; that he knew Blaine Weaver well. Without trying to shake him as to people, time and place, Dickerson succeeded in getting him to admit that it might have beeen some other man than Tony Drake, although he didn't think so.

It sounded tame and uninteresting, after Mrs. Dark's exciting narrative, but the crowd ceased to cough, sigh and move restlessly, and grew still, once more, and listened intently as Herman Osterholt came lumbering up the aisle toward the witness stand. He was a big man in every way and his head seemed enormous, likewise his feet. His face was like a full moon.

Manning looked on him with satisfaction. Bar accidents, he had here a rock against which Andrew Dickerson would break his lance. Nothing but the obviously truthful would come from this man, he felt sure.

Osterholt took the oath and stolidly faced the courtroom. To most of the audience he was a well known part of their daily lives, but he looked odd in the witness chair.

For years Herman Osterholt had been junkman for

Lost Harbor, North and South as well. He had bought and sold old papers, old rags, old clothes, old household goods, and utensils of every and all kinds; from an anchor to an old iron fence, everything had been gathered into Osterholt's; and many of them still reposed in his "yard," an immense enclosure, at the back of an old wooden house on Harbor Road.

Of late years some of their old things had been presented to many an incredulous citizen in another guise. Emma Osterholt, Herman's daughter, also fat and shrewd, had opened the Harbor Road Antique Shop, and there the former owners of old ship's lanterns and other treasures, could see that which they despised as junk, being sold to "visitors" for sums that made them remember sadly the ten or fifteen cents they had received.

As though evidence in a murder trial was no more to him than appraising an old ship's figure head, indeed, not as much, Osterholt passed the Court in review through his little pig-eyes and answered shortly and concisely the questions put to him.

Yes, he had lived in Lost Harbor a long time. Yes, he had known the Drakes. He bought all their waste he could get. Yes, he had bought a lot of waste paper and such trash in July 1927. It was in his sales book. He had it with him, if they wanted to know exact. He produced an old-fashioned shop ledger, and in obedience to Manning's order was about to read it aloud when Dickerson stopped him. This, he argued, could not be done, unless the book was first offered in evidence.

Osterholt listened while they wrangled and, when the legal tumult died down, said: "I dun't want for to leave 'em have my book for all the time. Why can't you copy the page out and put that into that evidence what you speak of?"

They finally compromised on that, and he lifted his fat finger from where it had been "keeping the place" and read: "'July 8, 1927, bought a load of waste from off Drake's.'"

"Do you remember this occasion, Mr. Osterholt?"

"Sure, I do. I dun't often get a load from Drake's on account that Alonzo True and me can't agree about prices. He sells most of his waste to the junkman in Thomaston. It's pretty good pickings, so I am glad when I get it."

"Do you remember anything special that you got from this lot on July 8th, 1927?"

"Well, it was a good haul. There were three or four ladies' dresses what I could get cleaned and sell, and there were some men's clothing, a bureau, and a lot of papers, an old silver vase which could be melted down; but what I thought was the best of all was that I got a whole suit of Mr. Tony's clothes in that lot, and I had them cleaned and sold them again, for good money."

"What was the matter with the suit?"

"It was dirty, and there was some dark stains on it."

"What kind of stains?"

"Looked like blood stains to me."

"Then, or now?"

"Why, both times. They looked like it then, and next time I saw Mr. Tony I asked him what he had been doing to get his clothes so messed up, and he said he had fallen overboard from his motor boat and knocked his head against the side of the boat, and that his nose had bled all over his suit, and he had torn the pocket of his coat."

"Did you believe him?"

"Sure, I did."

"Was it blood that had stained the suit?"

"Sure, it was. Me and my daughter we looked it

over and it sure was blood. The cleaner told me that, too."

"Was that all you found in that load of waste?"

Osterholt swung his head slowly around so that Mrs. Drake, Tony and the defence counsel came within his view. "All I guess I should tell about," he answered slowly.

"Come," said Manning, sharply. "We are here to judge what should or should not be told. You are here to answer questions."

"Sure."

"Did you buy anything else on the 8th of July, 1927, that seemed unusual or provoked your interest?"

Osterholt blinked. "Well, there was nothing else that was funny in the Drake lot. It was just the usual, only better'n the usual, some china that wasn't so broken, but I could sell it again; but there was something that happened that day that I remember was kinda funny."

"Tell it in your own words."

Dickerson rose to object to this as leading.

Osterholt watched him owlishly and, when he had finished, Manning gave the witness a sign to go on.

He blinked again, ducked his head and said: "I thought it kinda funny. Only mind you, I kep' my mouth shut, for there was nothing to talk about, you might say, because nobody knowed then that Jenny had been did away with. It was like this: Porter Hallay, he tried to sell a suit to Mike, the cesspool man, and Mike, he calls me in because it was kinda pulled and wrinkled. It had been washed to get it cleaned, you see, by someone who wasn't so good a washer. There was some pretty big stains left, and they was like the stains on Tony's suit only bigger, and by Godfreys, it was a suit that had been Tony's, too!"

"Did you speak of these stains?"

"Sure, and Porter he said: 'I was butchering last week,' and I told him it was too bad he used a good suit like that to do it in, and he said: 'Oh, Tony Drake'll give me another.' So I told Mike if he got them cleaned and pressed it ain't so bad for fifty cents."

"Then I went down along a ways and Blaine Weaver he seen me coming and tried to sell me some old pants and a coat and some other rubbish, and I won't take it. And By Gollies, that fellow's coat and pants were stained too! 'You been butchering too, maybe?' I said, and he kinda grabbed the pants and says: 'God-almighty! What do you mean by that, you——' Have I gotta repeat his language? It's bad."

"Not necessary," Dickerson told him quickly, "as I am about to interrupt and object to this entire answer as irrelevant, immaterial, and hearsay evidence only."

The objection was noted, but Osterholt was allowed to continue.

"When I told him I ain't buying, because if I did, he would be naked, maybe, except for his overalls, he told me he had as good a suit of clothes as the next, and showed me another suit of clothes and they was kinda wrinkled up, but they was more clean than the others, because somebody that knowed how to do it had taken the stains out with cold water."

"You mean blood-stains?"

"That was what they were. I knowed the look of them, and the kinda stain they left."

"Did you ask Blaine where he got this suit?"

"He said Alonzo—Lon True, sold them to him, and I looked at them and said: 'Then, by Godfreys! Lon's been butchering too,' and he laughed like he was going to split. I moved on. I didn't want his stuff. He kinda give me the crawls, Blaine Weaver did. So, by Gollies, when I heard about that poor Jenny, I went to the

coroner and told him what I remembered, because Jenny was a pretty nice friend to me when there was anything for me at any of the houses where she worked. She was too good for Blaine Weaver. Tony Drake he was kind to Jenny too, and he would never done anything to her——"

In vain, Manning had tried to stop him. He merely blinked and said: "Excuse, if I say what you don't like, but I wished I didn't haf' to say that Mr. Tony's suit was all stained, though it was, and I believe him it was nose bleed."

The judge and Manning finally stopped him, and Manning, with a sigh, turned him over to Andrew Dickerson for cross-examination, but Dickerson merely looked up, with a twinkle in his eyes, and said: "Thank you very much, Mr. Osterholt, but there will be no cross-examination. I believe every word you said."

"The prosecution rests," snapped Manning.

In the afternoon Dickerson opened for the defence with few words, spoken with so much conviction, so much fire, that the crowded courtroom listened breathlessly, as he told them he was there to show them that the defendant, Tony Drake, had no part or parcel in the murder of Jenny Weaver, and that he trusted to so convince the jury of this that there would be no question in their minds of his innocence.

Then he called to the stand the last person that Manning or anyone else expected. He called the handwriting expert, and spread before him the three notes that Juliet had bought from Rhody Codey. Manning having agreed to their admission, Clarges was asked whether they threw any light on the three notes, purporting to be from Jenny Weaver, which her mother had received after her disappearance.

The Court yawned a little as the expert began to give his testimony. It was hardly what they had expected

to top all the interesting testimony for the prosecution. They had hoped to see Andrew Dickerson bring on, immediately, some dramatic piece of evidence that would once more arouse the courtroom and cause renewed speculation as to the outcome of the case. As it stood now the odds were still three to one against Tony Drake and Blaine Weaver.

But presently they were all listening to Clarges, the expert as, in his clear, even tones, never lifted, but always plainly heard, he stated that the handwriting of the first letter was that of Blaine Weaver, the handwriting of the second was not that of Lon True, although it was signed with the initial "L", but a handwriting he had not yet been able to identify, and that the handwriting of the note signed "Tony" was, undoubtedly, Tony Drake's.

The prosecution stormily protested but, having allowed the introduction of the letters into evidence, was compelled to listen while the expert declared that these letters were further confirmation of the evidence already before the Court that the letters introduced by the prosecution as sent to Mrs. Codey and purporting to come from Jenny Weaver, were written by Alonzo True and traced over by Blaine Weaver.

Alonzo True, being detected in the act of leaving the courthouse, was brought back and placed in custody as a material witness, despite his excuse that it was his duty at Drake House that had caused him to wish to leave. He wanted to be there in time to serve dinner. The Drakes listened quietly, without showing any desire to aid him and, although he asked to be allowed to telephone instructions to the other servants, he was sent back to his place among the witnesses, much disgruntled.

The expert having, after many interruptions and much legal wrangling, finished his testimony, Blaine

Weaver's sister was put on the stand to testify as to the hour when her brother, Blaine, came home.

She had been "tidied up" for the occasion, and well coached. She resisted every effort Terriss, who examined her, could bring to bear upon her, insisting that her brother came home at half-past nine that night; that he then went out again and met Porter Hallay at the gate, but was back, and in bed, by half-past eleven that night. Her testimony was received in silence. If that were true there must have been some mistake about the prosecution's contention that he was up and about on the wood road after twelve o'clock.

His sister also denied that he had any stains on his clothing, save some that came from his injuring his leg while cutting hay some three days after the alleged disappearance of Jenny Weaver. Her antagonism to the "whole Codey tribe," as she designated them, could not be concealed.

After her came Blaine's mother and father, who corroborated their daughter's testimony about the time and the cutting of Blaine's leg. Andrew Dickerson had not wished to put them on the stand, but had yielded to the demand of Blaine's counsel. It seemed a hopeless muddle when the county attorney began his cross-examination of the father, who faced the courtroom stolidly, sure that they could get nothing from him, against Blaine.

"Are your clocks on local or daylight saving time?"

Juliet could have blessed him. She had been waiting for that question from Dickerson, but it was better, much better, this way. Had Dickerson meant it, or had he forgotten?

"They're the right time," snarled the elder Weaver. "Them clocks of mine keep the right time, and they ain't never been changed."

"That's just what we want to know, Mr. Weaver. Do they keep local time?"

For a second old Weaver's face changed, even through his thick brain had pierced the look that Blaine Weaver had shot toward him. It told him what he had done. If his clocks kept local time, then Blaine had been home at 10.30, had gone out again, and had not returned until after midnight. There was no help for it. He had said it, and so had his wife and daughter. On his heels, came the village watchmaker to prove that most of the clocks in town were changed to daylight saving time, but that it was known, especially to him, who had mended their clocks for them many times, that the Weavers kept the old time.

No cross-examination by Manning could shake his testimony. Andrew Dickerson and Manning exchanged a look.

Blaine Weaver and his attorney were much disturbed, as the attorney's frequent and vehement consultations with his client and with Andrew Dickerson bore witness, but Dickerson, himself, seemed strangely undisturbed, though the prosecutor looked triumphant.

Everybody drew a deep breath for, as the watchmaker left the witness stand, with him went Blaine Weaver's alibi.

CHAPTER XX

THE witness, on whom Andrew Dickerson had relied to set Tony's arrival at Drake House at a time that would make it impossible for him to have been seen on the wood road, as and when Alonzo True had testified, failed him utterly at the next session. This was Dave Hosey, the gardener at Drake House, who had been busy that July night trying to salvage some pine trees which Mrs. Drake had shipped from Norway, and which seemed about to succumb to the hot weather and the strange soil and climate. They were looking so badly that he had worked overtime, rigging up some sort of shade for them, and watering them.

But, on cross-examination he was indefinite as to why and how he knew what time it was, and became so mixed up as to daylight and local time that, although Dickerson straightened him out in re-direct, the faith of the jury in Hosey as a reliable observer had been badly shaken, and his testimony counted for little.

Mrs. Quinn, the housekeeper at Drake House, gave testimony which was in Tony's favour, and embarrassed the prosecution. She had given Porter Hallay a complete suit of Mr. Tony's old clothes, and he was wearing them the night of Jenny's disappearance. She saw him at the carnival in them. She declared that she saw Tony at the carnival, also, and further swore that somewhere about ten o'clock, she heard a woman's voice in the shrubbery and on the rocks in front of the "sun parlour," as she called Mrs. Drake's morning room. When asked why she did not investigate she said,

succinctly, that she had enough to do minding her own business, without tracking about spying on other people, in the house, or out; that was not the way she earned her living.

She declared that when True called Mr. Tony on the phone, True was not at Drake House. When asked how she knew this she said she had been at Mullin's Drug Store, having ice-cream soda with some friends. Asked who beside herself was in the drug store, she named her two friends and added that Len Willoughby, the singer, who had once been a Lost Harbor boy, and was the town's richest and greatest celebrity, was there. Lon True had come in later.

She knew he called Mr. Tony, because, when Lon True stepped into the booth she heard him give the Stover telephone number. Len Willoughby had spoken to True as he came out and then entered the same booth. There was only one booth. Lon True did not see her when he first came into the drug store, and when he did notice her he was "awful annoyed," and hardly spoke to her. Afterward, as he was going out, he stopped and said: "If it's convenient, Mrs. Quinn, I wish you'd be home within the next hour, as I may have to be out late."

"That was all he said?"

"Yes, sir, I thought it was enough too. I thought I was entitled to a holiday as much as any one else."

"When you came back to the house you found Mr. Tony Drake there?"

"No, he came in a little afterward, and asked if True was in, and I told him: 'No, I just came from the drug store. He was there. He said he was going to meet you.' Then Mr. Tony said: 'Right you are, but I hoped he'd come here.' Then someone called him up, I don't know who, and when he finished talking he set off along the road through the woods."

"That was the last you saw of him that night?"

"The last I saw, but I heard him later that night on the rocks and on the wood road, with a woman."

"How did you know it was a woman?"

"She was crying."

"You are sure that it was Mr. Tony who was with her?"

"I couldn't be mistaken."

"And you are sure that she was crying?"

"Yes, sir. I could hear her sobbing."

"Could you hear what she said, if anything?"

"No, sir. I couldn't make out anything except that she was crying and I could tell the way Mr. Tony was talking that he was kinda petting her and edging her along."

"Were they talking loudly?"

"No, sir. Very softly, but the woman cried quite loud."

"Then what happened?"

"Well, then I felt that if there was one thing I wasn't going to do it was to snoop and pry and spy after Mr. Tony. Goodness knows there was enough of that going on, so I turned my light out and got into bed and didn't hear or see anything else until morning."

"Did the crying stop?"

"Well, as soon as I moved away from the window and got into bed, I didn't hear any more. I don't know when it stopped."

"And in the morning, Mr. Tony was there at breakfast as usual?"

"Except that he had a black eye. Yes, sir."

"Did he say anything to you about how he got the black eye?"

"Only in a joking way. Told me the other man had worse. You know how they all say, old and young: 'You'd ought to see the other fellow,' when you notice a black eye on them."

Manning cross-examined her briefly, but failed to shake her story or the stories of the two maids who followed her, which were substantially the same.

And then Andrew Dickerson put Blaine Weaver on the witness stand. There was little but bravado to be read on his handsome, common face.

Andrew Dickerson, evidently continuing a discussion he had had with Weaver's personal counsel, stopped him before he was sworn.

"I wish to again call your attention to the fact that you are not required by law to give evidence in this case. You are one of the defendants and, as such, can refuse to be placed on the witness stand and questioned."

Blaine, after a glance toward his counsel, who nodded to him, signified that he understood this, but that he desired, nevertheless, to give his testimony, that the truth might be known.

Andrew Dickerson weighed his question carefully before he put it to the witness. This man was slippery. One could tell that by his eyes alone. Immediately Dickerson placed before him the three letters Mrs. Codey had received, purporting to be signed and sent by Jenny, and asked Blaine what he knew about them. He knew nothing, he said. He smiled when given the expert's testimony to the effect that he, Blaine, had traced these letters over Lon True's imitation of Jenny's handwriting. He denied all knowledge of any such action, declared that he knew nothing about them until Mrs. Codey produced them and showed them to him; did not know how, or by whom, they were written. As far as he was concerned, he had accepted them as genuine, and thought that they were from Jenny.

Dickerson, after proving that Blaine Weaver was in Portland the day that the letters were mailed, appeared to drop these letters. Blaine knew all about them, he

was sure, and every word Blaine said convinced him and, he could see, satisfied the jury, also, that he was not telling the truth. Blaine Weaver's lies could not do away with the facts which Juliet had unearthed, that they were written on paper which Blaine Weaver had bought at Mullin's Drug Store, and still had in his possession, and that the ink was also from a bottle purchased at the same time and still in Blaine's possession.

"Where did you leave your wife on the night of July 7th, 1927?"

"At Harbor Hall."

"Come, Blaine, we have long ago left behind us that fairy tale. You did part with Jenny at Harbor Hall, but you did not leave her there. Where and when did you see Jenny, your wife, for the last time on the night of July 7th, 1927?"

Blaine shot a look at Dickerson that was far from amiable. Yet, as Dickerson was for the defence, he must, at least, appear friendly, so he answered reluctantly: "I saw her last running toward town."

"That was at what time?"

"Some time around ten."

"Where was she?"

Blaine blinked. "On the road."

"Where?"

Blaine hesitated. "She climbed outa Porter's car and started running toward town."

"Where was this car?"

"Waiting on Sandy Road."

"I thought Porter testified he had gone home."

"Afterward."

"How long afterward?"

"Pretty soon. That is, first we put Jen in the car and took her down toward Father."

"Neither your father, your mother, nor your

sister mentioned Jenny coming there, in their testimony."

"Sure they didn't. They didn't know."

"Why didn't they know?"

"Because Jen came to herself before we got there, and she was mad at me and wouldn't go any further. She jumped right out the car, herself, and ran up the road."

"And that was the last you saw of her that night?"

"It sure was the last I saw of her."

"You are positive?"

"Yes, sir."

Dickerson turned his witness over to Manning. He dared not ask him any more, or Manning might go too far in his cross-examination. It was with difficulty Dickerson kept from cross-examining Blaine himself.

The cross-examination was unexpectedly brief. Backward and forward Mr. Manning took his witness only to feel, as it was only too evident the jury felt, that he was laughing in his sleeve at them all; that there was a mixture of truth in the mess of lies he was telling them; that he was careful to make that little bit of truth stretch so that it met the times and places mentioned by the other witnesses, and so gave the whole a semblance of truth.

Finally Manning grew tired of this and sprung the question Dickerson had not dared to ask, and from which Blaine now thought himself safe: "Then, if that was the last time you saw Jenny, what were you doing on the wood road at midnight?"

Blaine took a moment to answer that question. A moment with his eyes lowered, so that they might not see that he was cornered. Then, with quick cunning, he deliberately threw at Manning an answer which he trusted would astonish him so that he, himself, might have a chance to double on his tracks and remember

if anyone beside Ruloff had testified to seeing him on the road at midnight. "I was trailing Len Willoughby. I know something about him the rest of the town dun't know—yet. I expected to meet him there and see how much I could get out of him if I didn't tell."

There was no doubt about the sensation Blaine had created among his audience. Most of them, including the prosecuting attorney, looked dazed at this sudden projection of a well-known character, like Len Willoughby, into a murder trial with which, until this moment, he had seemed to have no possible connection.

Len Willoughby was a great man and a hero to his townsmen and especially to his townswomen. To Juliet, it came with no uncertain note, that here was her clue, though just why Blaine had dared give Willoughby's name now, she didn't quite know. She stepped from her seat and stood at the back of the courtroom for an instant, listening, before she slipped out.

"What about Lon True?" Manning shot at him. "Wasn't he in the deal?"

"No, by God!" Blaine's strong voice rang through the courtroom. "Why should I share with Lon True?"

There was a silence, a silence as of disgust and anger, all through the courtroom that boded ill for Blaine Weaver and, although his attorney and Dickerson tried to soften this impression, they did not succeed.

"I wan't trusting Lon with this thing," Weaver repeated, truculently. "It was between Len Willoughby and me, and it'll stay that way. It's private business," he declared, and his eyes sought the Drakes' with a sort of insolent triumph. Neither cross nor redirect could budge him from that position, and Manning, too evidently mistrusted this witness to attempt to probe further into the Willoughby affair. He contented himself with asking Blaine if he had met

Willoughby and when Blaine said no, that Willoughby did not turn up, dropped the subject, after asking when he gave up waiting and went home. This Blaine stated vaguely to be somewhere about twelve-thirty. The defence did not follow up this trail, but called Tony Drake, as a witness.

He walked firmly across the courtroom without looking to right or left. He recognised no one. He kept his head high and his eyes fixed at a point above the heads of the spectators. He was not asking any one to recognize or acknowledge him—not even Jane.

He looked only at Dickerson as the questions were asked or turned squarely toward the jury as he answered them, and his answers were clear and plain and his manner made them seem to be the truth, but in this world innocence so often wears the guise of guilt and hardness that the average man, the average juror, has a hard time of it, save for that something in a man's eyes, a man's manner and voice, that bears the stamp of God's own truth and causes even a doubter to pause and think.

After giving his name and stating that he lived at Lost Harbor during the summer and most of the fall, until his university term began, Tony was asked, immediately: "Please tell me, in your own words, and without telling what other people said to you, or you to them, just what you did on July 7th, 1927, from, say five o'clock."

"I went with Miss Stover, Miss Jane Stover, to supper at an inn near Camden, and came back early to her house here at Lost. While I was there, I was telephoned to come home. When I got there, there was no one to meet me. A little later True, the butler, telephoned me from Lost. I went there and saw him at the carnival, and stayed for a little while, then started home alone.

"On the wood road, I met Blaine Weaver, who started quarrelling with me. He wanted me to give him money. Porter Hallay was there. Jenny Weaver was there too. Weaver struck her, and I ran after him, but before I could stop him, he had knocked Jenny down, toward the trees near where the skeleton was found. Then he came at me again and I tried to defend myself, but I fell, struck a stone and it must have stunned me for when I came to myself he had taken Jenny away. I never saw her again."

"What did you do after Blaine had left, with Jenny?"

"When I regained consciousness Lon True was trying to carry me along the path. He wanted me to look after my eye, but I was angry, very angry. I went back, looking for Jenny and, when I couldn't find her, I couldn't rest, so I went out again in—in one of our cars, and rode as far as the railroad station here, in this town, and then back again. Went into the drug store, saw Porter and Blaine together and tried to get them to tell me about Jenny, but they wouldn't; rode about until quite late and then went home."

"That is all?"

"That is all."

"You never knew how much, or how little, Jenny had been hurt?"

"I never knew."

"Why did Blaine Weaver demand money from you?"

"He knew I disliked the thought of Jenny being beaten by him. I had always liked Jenny, and always thought that both her husband and her family took advantage of her generous nature. Jenny Weaver was both generous and kind," he added, gravely, as though in answer to the cynical expressions on the faces of his audience. He looked toward his fellow prisoner and his face grew dark. "If," he said distinctly, "Jenny had

had half a chance, she would have made a fine woman."

For the second time in the history of the case, a genuine tribute had been paid to the dead woman. Instinctively, everybody in the courtroom felt a little ashamed. They had been eager for any bit of gossip about Jenny that leaked through to them. There had been much whispering and not a few furtive smiles over the fact that Tony Drake had always been "soft" about Jenny, though she was older, and much speculating how a pretty girl like Jane Stover felt about Tony having his name so closely connected with the village light-o'-love. But here was Tony talking about Jenny Weaver as a person whom, somehow, the whole community had misjudged, who had not been given a chance. Instinctively, they looked at each other under cover of waiting to hear Tony's next statement, and they looked uncomfortable.

But the next second they were engaged in watching a very skilful battle, for Manning took over the witness, determined to tear the veil from the very circumspect statement given by Tony. Tony was equally determined that Manning, and the Court, should know only as much as he chose to tell.

To every question regarding the man whom he had expected to meet at the house that night, and who was not there, Manning received the same reply: "It was True who telephoned me. I did not meet anyone at the house."

"When you were wandering up and down about this town that night, after Jenny Weaver had been flung in the car and you had been given a black eye by her husband, were you alone?"

The witness started. His face became pale. He lifted his handkerchief to mop his brow. "No."

"Who was with you?"

"I cannot tell you."

"Was it a woman or a man? You can, at least, tell me that."

Tony hesitated, and then spoke slowly: "It was a woman."

"Her name?"

"I cannot tell you."

"Was it Jenny Weaver?"

"It was not Jenny Weaver."

Manning and Dickerson exchanged glances, yet Dickerson did not come to his client's rescue. He, as well as Manning, wanted to know that name. But they could not get it from Tony Drake.

The Court's quiet intervention made no difference. On that one subject Tony was dumb. They might do as they liked. He would not tell, so, finally, Manning ceased to cross-examine, after demanding that this witness be ready for re-cross-examination as soon as the name of the unknown woman could be learned, unless the defendant's counsel intended to produce this woman as witness.

To the astonishment of Tony, whose face was a study in suppressed anger and surprise, Dickerson solemnly told Manning that the unknown woman would be placed on the witness stand, later on, and the district attorney be given every opportunity to examine her. He kept his eyes from meeting his client, or his client's mother, as he said so, but he had seen utter rout in Mrs. Drake's eyes, as well as black anger in Tony's. He looked quickly about, but Juliet was nowhere in sight, and Bill Davis had left the courtroom.

He took a deep breath and named his next witness to the court crier, though he was hardly able to see the writing on the paper in his hand. He had no idea who the unknown woman was. Not the least in the world. Unless Juliet could help him, he was lost, for neither

Tony nor his mother would do anything but hinder him.

"Jane Stover!" called the court crier. "Jane Stover!"

CHAPTER XXI

JULIET, after signalling to Bill as soon as she could catch his eye, had left the courtroom. Clarges' apparently irrelevant allusion to the note, in a handwriting he could not yet recognize, signed with the initial "L", had been persistently haunting her. It had made itself into an alarm that would not be stilled until she went to the studio and examined a note she had received a week ago from Len Willoughby, the great man of Lost Harbor whom his town alternately admired, boasted about—and laughed at.

She had met him through Marian, and there was a note, an invitation from him at the studio. It was utterly foolish, she told herself, and Len Willoughby could not possibly have had anything to do with Jenny or her tragic death. Yet, as soon as Bill joined her, she climbed into his car, and they started toward Lost. She carefully informed Bill that she was sure she was mad to think Willoughby could be entangled in this case, and the next moment demanded to know all Bill knew about him.

Bill, insisting that it was a wild goose chase, declared that she would make herself ridiculous if she brought Len Willoughby, with his wonderful voice, and world-wide reputation, into Court.

Juliet, he found, was quite determined; until she proved him innocent of writing the "L" note, she would keep on investigating. As they raced along the road, Bill, finding she knew only that Willoughby was a popular singer, explained that he had been a fisherman at Lost, when the dramatic school first came there.

The director, attracted by Len's personality, had persuaded him to help out in a play, and so discovered in him talent no one else had suspected. He had also carefully advised Len, knowing that his voice was remarkable, to study singing.

Len's success had been phenomenal for an enthusiastic teacher had brought him to the attention of several concert directors, and begun to talk opera, when the "sound pictures" came into existence and filled Len's purse beyond his wildest dreams. He could afford now to study for the operatic stage, and did so, but first, as he had the keen business sense of the true Maine man, had carefully banked half of what he made, despite temptations to splurge. He had re-imbursed the dramatic director, who had, indeed, not expected so swift a return. He told Len, more than once, that his success was an advertisement that fully repaid him. Len did not agree, and continued to adorn his many magazine and newspaper interviews with statements of all he owed to the director and, every summer, visited the class and loaned his name and presence to a special performance that brought a summer audience from far and near.

Willoughby, as Juliet knew, had bought one of the "big places" along the coast at Lost and established his old mother there, for Len was unmarried yet, which fact added to his list of attractions. To his enthusiastic townsmen he was "the same old Len." He had forgotten none of his friends and, within due measure, the town had profited by his success. Bill told her that Lost Harbor people openly boasted that their Len was a good boy, and that there was nothing in him of the Hollywood type.

It was for a specimen of the handwriting of this celebrated and attractive person that Juliet was doggedly driving homeward. "Crazy!" Bill finished.

"I know," Juliet admitted, "that it may have been written by his secretary, but I've got to know."

As they crossed the bridge, Jane Stover walked toward the witness stand.

Tony Drake's face lost all its colour and he leaned forward, his hands tightly grasping the arms of his chair, as he watched. He felt, at that moment, that nothing that ever happened could make him forgive the town and these people for compelling this proud girl to face a crowd of hostile and semi-hostile neighbours. That they should so push and pry into his affairs seemed to him something that was not to be borne. He dug his fingernails deep into the wooden arms of the chair. It did not seem possible that he could let things go on. This seemed to outdo anything that they had yet done to him. The ignorant fools! He half rose to his feet, felt Andrew Dickerson's strong hand on his arm restraining him, and sank back again.

It had to be faced, that hand reminded him, this was part of what he must pay, whether he was guilty or not. He gave one quick look toward his mother. She was back in her place again, but her eyes were closed. Tony looked away with a sick feeling of hopelessness, for it had flashed through his brain, that brain he was trying to keep clear and unprejudiced for, if he did not, he would go mad, that his mother did not mind so much the girl's suffering, as the fact that she was compelled to watch her suffer. Milly Drake was always the first to save herself.

Jane Stover answered clearly and quietly the first question as to who she was, and that she knew Tony Drake well. She had been with him on the 7th of July, 1927. There was an instant turning of interested faces toward her, as she admitted that she had been in Tony Drake's company all afternoon. They had motored into Camden and had an early supper at a tea

room there and then had motored home, because Jane's mother was away and she had promised to be home early. They had arrived between seven-thirty and eight, at the carnival grounds. They had gone in and walked about and then Tony had taken her home. She had reached the house at nine, and Tony had left her there a few minutes after nine.

"Was it the custom for Mr. Drake to leave so early in the evening?"

"No, sir."

"Why, then, did he go so early that night, if you know?"

"He was telephoned."

"By whom?"

"I don't know. He didn't say, but I thought the telephone came from Drake House."

"Why did you think that?"

"Because when I answered the call it was True, the butler at Drake House, who told me that someone wanted to speak to Mr. Tony."

"Then it was True who spoke to Mr. Tony?"

"I think not. He merely called Tony to the wire. It was another person, I am sure, who spoke to him."

"How do you know that?"

Jane looked directly at Dickerson. "Without being told who is speaking on the wire there is often a something in the tone of the voice that tells you. I don't know how to explain it, but I am sure, from the sound that came over the wire, and from Mr. Drake's voice and face as he listened, that it was not True speaking."

"Were you in the same room?"

"Oh, yes."

"Did anything Mr. Drake said give you a clue to the person with whom he was speaking?"

"No."

"Could you tell whether it was a man or a woman?"

"It was my impression that it was a man."

"Did Mr. Drake seem disturbed?"

"He was very much disturbed, and he left almost immediately."

"At about what time?"

"I can't say exactly. A little after nine."

"What excuse did he give for his abrupt departure?"

Jane's eyes darkened. She looked directly at Andrew Dickerson and said: "He told me that there was someone waiting for him at the house and he must go, at once. He doubted whether he could come back again, but he could not tell me any more that night, maybe no other night, for it was business, and not his business alone."

"Did he say anything else?"

Jane did not speak for a moment, and then she said slowly: "He said it was dirty business, and his share in it was necessary to save some one else, and I must not ask him about it, because he would not tell."

"That was all he said?"

"That was all."

"Did he ever tell you any more?"

"No. I never alluded to it, sure that if it was anything he wanted me to know he would tell me."

"You have great confidence in Mr. Tony Drake?"

"I have."

"The witness is yours," Dickerson said to Manning.

Manning rose to cross-examine Jane Stover and, to many people in the courtroom, this was the very height of melodrama. There were many people there who remembered that Manning had long been "after" Jane Stover, and many professed to know that she had "turned him down for Tony Drake." Whether she had turned him down or not, there was that in Manning's eyes, as he looked at Jane on the witness

stand, that told that he was stirred beyond his usual depths.

A man's business is a man's business and must be gone through with, though the heaven's fall, but to face the girl you have always loved and admired, on the witness stand, with the man for whom she has always shown a preference on trial for his life, and you, who would give anything to have kept her out of the mess, cross-examining her, was a situation crowded with all sorts of cruel possibilities.

Yet none dreamed that Jane Stover, a model of decorous behaviour, except for the fact that she would associate with Tony Drake, would ever betray her real feelings. She'll stand there looking like pretty Polly Perkins and answer out good and loud, and act as cold as ice, was the crowd's general opinion. Them Stovers was always high-strung ones and nobody could ever get any change out of them, except when they got riled. Manning, he dun't dast to put too many funny questions to her. Jane'll find a way to squelch him, if he does.

Slowly, but skilfully, Manning led her over the ground of her direct examination and found he could not make her add one jot to what she had told Dickerson. Manning was almost certain that Jane, though she was truthful, was within the letter of the law only, when she said she did not know and that Tony had never told her anything further. He was keen and he noted that in all Jane's protestations she was careful never to admit what she had guessed. He twisted and turned her answers to try to get her to say: "I thought," or "I guessed," or something that would make an entering wedge possible in this stone wall of reticence she had erected before him. He tried to find a way of getting one sly, sharp, thrust through to what he wanted so that he could compel her to reveal the secret that lay

behind the wall. But Jane was game. Thrust after thrust he gave and always met the stone wall. At last, a little tired with all this fencing, Manning asked what proved to be the last straw: "Even though you have known Tony Drake since childhood, you would not lie for him?"

"No, I wouldn't lie, because I'm convinced that only the truth will save him. Once the truth is known, you will all see how you have misjudged Tony."

"But you can tell us no more?"

"No more."

"How about the man who telephoned him that night, Miss Stover? That man's name might make all the difference in the world."

"I did not see him."

"But you heard him."

"I did not hear his name. I will not give you mere suspicions. The man's errand might have been quite innocent of any bearing on this case."

"I will take that risk, Miss Stover. Will you please tell the Court and the jury whose voice you thought you heard over the telephone?"

Despite Manning's urging, Jane steadfastly refused, and the Court would not force her to tell what was merely a suspicion. For, if an innocent man, unconnected with the murder in any way, was involved, it might do him great harm.

The judge rapped for order as the wrangle between Dickerson and Manning as to the admissibility of her answer continued, and, before another question could be put, Jane suddenly rose and said: "I don't think it is that man you want, but somewhere in this Court is a man, or woman, who knows that Tony Drake did not commit this murder, and knows where he was in those hours of the night when Jenny Weaver was done to death. And, if he, or she, keeps silent to the end of this

trial, I pray God that they may know, sometime, what it means to suffer and to see someone they love suffer, unjustly, and be powerless to help them."

Mrs. Drake gave a faint cry, which seemed to the audience a cry of sympathy but, as the Court ordered silence and that these last remarks be stricken from the record, Manning asked relentlessly: "Is it not true, Miss Stover, that you are very much prejudiced in favour of this particular defendant, that, in effect, there exists between you a secret engagement; that you would not, if you knew, give voice to anything that would injure the defendant?"

Before Andrew Dickerson could interpose his objection Jane again was on her feet, clutching the rail. "There is no secret engagement," she cried, drowning out Andrew Dickerson's "Objection."

Wise man that he was, he gave one glance at the girl, and ceased. One could not stop a torrent. The end to endurance had come to this quiet mannered girl, whose lovely face stood out, dead white, against the dark wall of the courtroom.

Heedless of the judge's gavel and his signal to the officers of the law, she cried out: "If you try to throw out any testimony I have given because I am prejudiced, why let the judge and jury know, and you, you hear it too, I am prejudiced. I know Tony Drake is innocent, and I love him. I have always loved him, I always will. Make the most of that—it's true."

As the court officer put his hand on her shoulder, there broke from the hitherto spell-bound audience a prolonged cheer that drowned the sound of the judge's gavel, for a moment. It could never have happened with a courtroom filled only with native Maine men and women. The New England reserve would have been too strong, but the leaven of strangers had worked, and the Maine residents did not fail to rise to the challenge.

This girl was their own, she must not think that her fellow-citizens were lacking in appreciation.

Tony Drake was on his feet, his lips murmuring her name, but Manning sank back in his chair, his hand before his eyes.

When the girl was led away, the judge, indignant, cleared the courtroom and adjourned until 10.30 next morning.

CHAPTER XXII

ON their way back, Bill Davis refused either to return to the courtroom, or accompany Juliet to Terriss' office, if the Court was not in session. He said he did not want to see Tony just now, after Jane's testimony. He did not know what had been said or done, but his heart was sick within him at the thought of what those two poor children had gone through. He was indignant that Juliet refused to talk about them, refused to talk about anything but Willoughby. He told her that he would motor to Portland. With Porter held in jail by the county attorney, it was safe to bring Marian and Julian back.

Juliet quite understood the inference that, by surrounding her once more with an atmosphere of domesticity, he might restore her to normality and reason. She resented the implication and, after one of the most alarming quarrels in all their stormy friendship, she alighted at the courthouse.

A fellow-pressman willingly gave her a brief summary of Jane Stover's testimony, and she hurried to Terriss' office. Bill drove, at a speed that indicated his mental turmoil, toward Portland.

Before Andrew Dickerson could speak, Juliet was clutching his arm, fairly stuttering with excitement. "Andy, I want an expert. Can we use Clarges? I—I—want an expert on the job, at once. Have him compare this letter with the note I bought from the Codeys. The one signed 'L'. Quick, Andy! Please. Then I want an officer and a subpœna for Len Willoughby, as a material witness, and I want it served, at once, Andy,

at once, before he can leave the State. Start them both, and let me tell you about it while something's being done. Oh, what an ass I've been not to see it before!"

Andrew released his arm, gave his orders, after a glance at the note she held, and pushed her into a chair. It was not necessary to tell her to keep quiet. Juliet had stopped babbling the moment he rang his bell for the Terriss clerk.

When the necessary orders had been given to the clerk and the officer he had summoned, Dickerson threw himself back in his chair, and faced Juliet: "Now then?"

Rapidly Juliet told him her suspicion that it was Len Willoughby's note.

Dickerson frowned. "Yes, I can see that much, myself, but Len Willoughby—and Jenny Weaver! Good God! It's impossible."

"Is it? Is anything impossible where men and women are concerned?" She gave a long sigh, and then, instead of dilating on her find, as Andrew expected, suddenly asked: "Are you really putting Tony's 'unknown' on the stand?"

Andrew Dickerson laughed. "Did I bluff you too? Of course I'm not. I can't get anything out of Tony."

Juliet looked at him sagely. "Then put Mrs. Drake on the stand first thing in the morning, with Jane Stover's words ringing in her ears, I think she knows something we can use."

"You think that it really matters so much, if Willoughby did write the note?"

Juliet nodded. "Just as I think that time is the important thing in this case, and I want to know everybody who was up and stirring *after* midnight."

"Why?"

"Because almost everybody in this case started in trying to prove they were in bed by a little after ten,

except Tony. I want to know who was on that road after twelve, when there was no moon."

"My God! You think this case can be won on eleventh hour discoveries!"

"It's the only way we can win when a case is three years old and every clue stale or buried, and you know it."

"To-day I thought that that girl held the key, or I would never have subjected her to Manning's cross-examination. I'm sick about it. I've helped to drag the veil away from something sacred, I feel like one who blasphemes against all he holds to be holy. And what has it done for the case?"

"Everything," Juliet said, vehemently. "I can't help what Jane suffered. If it saves Tony, she'll be glad."

"My God! Women are hard. That girl's face. I shan't forget it soon, nor will Manning."

"You couldn't have stopped her. Nothing either of you could do, Andrew, would have stopped that girl. She didn't care what happened as long as she did what she could for Tony Drake."

"She undoubtedly helped him with the jury. Nothing of the deliberately sensational in that bitter outburst. It rang true, but it will read like the most sensational courtroom episode. Though it was a plea meant to reach some one's ears. Some one in the courtroom. And now you want to call the mother!"

There was a knock on the door and Lowell Drake came in.

"Dickerson, I've insisted that my wife tell you all she knows. You," he looked at Juliet sombrely, "have suspected from the beginning that she knew something, haven't you?"

Juliet nodded.

He turned again to Dickerson. "I think my wife's

been afraid, if I knew it, it would change my attitude toward her."

If Jane's eyes and voice were to haunt Andrew Dickerson, this man's were to haunt Juliet. She had urged vehemently that Mrs. Drake be compelled to speak, but never had she imagined that the gay, careless Lowell Drake could look like this. His eyes were deeply shadowed, he looked older than Juliet had ever seen him but, when she turned as the door from the outer office opened to admit Mrs. Drake, she realized that, though he seemed older, he still looked years younger than his wife. Carefully applied make-up had not been able to survive the strain, nor the stream of tears that had washed Mrs. Drake's cheeks, and hollowed her eyes. She was a wreck, a pathetic wreck. Both Juliet and Andrew Dickerson averted their eyes from the sight. But, if Lowell Drake saw it too, he steeled himself. He led her to a chair.

"Now, tell Mr. Dickerson everything, Milly. I'll stand by you."

Before Andrew Dickerson could look toward Juliet she had gone, and was running toward the courthouse. She must send her stuff. The telegraph office was crowded and Al was out. She hurried toward the railroad station. Al and the operator were friends. She might find him there. She did, and as he took charge of it, she wondered what Mrs. Drake was telling Andrew now. Was it the whole truth? Juliet hoped so, but knowing Milly Drake, she doubted it.

As Juliet came out of the telegraph office, she was aware that she was being closely watched, and on impulse turned to see the watcher. Len Willoughby was standing, his bag at his feet, waiting for the train. Juliet looked quickly toward the courthouse. The officer Dickerson had told to serve the subpœna was coming down the steps. She went to the edge of the

platform, caught the first small boy in sight, and bribed him to tell the officer to come to the station.

Then she went toward Len Willoughby, who was alternately looking at his watch and in the direction the train was expected.

He greeted her cordially and gave her that "intense look" that was one of his greatest assets.

As she smiled at him, Juliet prayed that the officer would get there before the train arrived.

"You are on this case, of course, Mrs. Jackson. What do you think of it?"

"That the case isn't going Tony Drake's way at all. Every witness seems to embroil him deeper in the muddle."

"Ah—" he said, and frowned, without looking at her.

Juliet moved nearer him, and spoke quietly. "If you know anything, Mr. Willoughby, it would be infinitely better for you—as a singer—if you went directly to Tony's lawyer, to Mr. Dickerson, and told what you know. In the end the truth will come out, but if, after that girl's pathetic speech, you are holding out the slightest thing that might count for Tony, why most of your matinée appeal will go—when the truth is known."

He looked at her, at first, uncomprehendingly, almost dazed, then, with quick suspicion, said: "What makes you think I know anything about this case? What do you know?"

Juliet shook her head. She wondered whether the fact that his name had been mentioned in Court by Blaine Weaver had reached his ears yet. "Nothing, but I think, if I were you, that I'd see Mr. Dickerson. Come with me. I'll get you through to him. There isn't a moment to lose."

Willoughby was, quite evidently, disturbed and puzzled. "But I haven't anything," he began, as the officer with the subpœna approached them.

As he spoke to Willoughby, the train pulled in.

Juliet watched it pull out again, without Len Willoughby. She stood, for a moment, watching him go, with the officer, toward the courthouse, then turned and hurried by a short-cut, out-distancing him to Andrew Dickerson's office.

"Andy——"

"Don't bother me, Judy. I'm too busy to listen."

"Not to me," Juliet said, with a quick glance at his perturbed countenance. "but, just in case Mrs. Drake hasn't told you all you want, here's somebody who has a word or two for your ear." She indicated Willoughby, who came toward them.

Andrew Dickerson's hand fell on Len Willoughby's arm, and pulled him toward the doorway. "How you do it, I don't know, Juliet, but come in, Willoughby."

Before the reluctant Willoughby could speak, he had been drawn into the inner office and the door closed.

It was warm and sultry in the morning. One of those hot September mornings that make one think that August has not yet departed but, as the judge came into the courtroom, and the people rose, Juliet looked up to see the sudden gloom of a fall day, when a cloud passes between the sun and its worshippers. It was a somewhat subdued courtroom. The judge's action in clearing the Court yesterday had had its effect. There was less noise, less talking. No one wanted to miss any of the case now. All were anxious to hear every word of the coming testimony. For a moment, as the Court took its seat, Juliet held her breath, until the court officer called the name of the next witness:

"Mildred Ashurst Drake."

At last, one of the "rich ladies", one of the summer colony was to be pilloried before them. This was different from Jane Stover, who belonged in their

midst, who had grown up with them. To be sure, all the Stovers were ladies, though what her grandmother, Ashubah Miles Stover, would have said to her goings-on in this courtroom, Goodness Only Knew!

But this was one of the unapproachable Drakes. People who had come to Lost years ago, but were still "strangers", still "city people"; no part of the rocks, the stones, the trees, the earth of Maine, but pilgrims and wayfarers who were resting for a little while on her lovely shores.

And, in a pitiful case, this woman was. Maine men and women had watched her grow old before their eyes, in this courtroom, within the last few days. It was difficult to believe this was the Mrs. Drake who had "changed husbands" and neglected her boy so scandalously for the last husband. Mrs. Drake had seemed to defy age. She had beautiful clothes, and clever arts to hide the ravages which time's passage makes on high and low, rich and poor for, live ever so carefully or so carelessly, one day all must say: "I, who once was young, am now old."

Though her boy was old enough to marry, she had seemed still to be little older than the girl who had first come to Lost, and, long ago, been married from Drake House. In the few days she had breathed the air of the courtroom, lines that had never before been seen, seemed to stand out on her face. Indeed, that face seemed ravaged and changed far more terribly than if they had seen her grow a little older every year and had become accustomed to the fact that she was no longer even the "young-looking woman" who had married Lowell Drake, to the scandal of her contemporaries. She looked haggard and worn, though she was still beautifully dressed, and powder and rouge had been skilfully applied.

Worn out Milly Drake was in body and mind, from

lack of sleep, and too much worry. For now, in spite of all she had done to avoid it, she must take into her confidence all these people, these people whom she despised, but who had tracked her down and forced her, as she thought, into this corner where she must tell all, or be for ever hateful to herself and others.

Yet, Milly might still have kept silent, if it had not been for Lowell. It was Lowell's admiration for Jane Stover that had roused his suspicions. He had told Milly, abruptly, and without any preamble, that any woman, who could keep still when Tony's whole life was at stake, should be whipped through the town, without remorse and without forgiveness. Better tell now, he had said quietly, and keep him at her side, than say nothing and lose him. So Milly had nerved herself for her visit to Andrew Dickerson and told him something—not all. For Milly's nature was not open and generous. Always she held something back. If she could only manage, somehow, to make herself so appealing that she could help Tony, and still keep Lowell!

Andrew Dickerson had not been deceived by her wiles. Milly quite forgot that she had lost much of her original physical charm with this new haggardness that had crept into her face. The little flutterings with her hands, the soft cooing voice, effective enough in a young and pretty woman, lost their appeal when they were used by a haggard woman.

So she came to the witness stand, without having told the whole truth, and the men she had told her half-truths watched her, without trust, without respect, without faith, without much hope for Tony as she faced the crowded courtroom, with pitiful hands that could not keep still.

Dickerson asked her the initial questions as to name, and residence, in an even tone, inwardly praying that he might be given the words to guide her testimony in

the proper channels, so that he might bring out certain facts that he knew she was keeping back. Suddenly he remembered what Juliet had begged him to ask her and, without further preliminary asked it: "When were you last in Lost Harbor, Mrs. Drake?"

"I—I don't understand."

"I mean before this trial. When were you last in Lost Harbor?"

Mrs. Drake hesitated, and looked at her husband.

Lowell Drake nodded to her encouragingly.

Mrs. Drake did not look at him again. She looked off into space and finally said in a low tone: "This is the first time, in more than three years, that I have been in Lost Harbor."

"When did you leave Lost, three years ago?"

"On the night of July 7th, 1927."

Instantly, the air of the courtroom was tense with astonishment, followed by a murmur which caused the judge to lift his gavel with the statement that any unfitting demonstrations would again empty the courtroom and this time close it to all who had not business pertaining to this case. The murmur died down, but everyone knew that his neighbour was weighing the fact. Mrs. Drake in town the night Jenny Weaver disappeared! What did it mean?

Manning's eyes narrowed and he leaned forward. What was this Dickerson was trying to put over on him, now?

"When did you arrive in Lost Harbor, in July, 1927?"

"The evening of the 7th."

"How did you come? By rail or motor?"

"I came by motor."

"Who was with you?"

"No one."

"Did you drive yourself?"

"I did."

"Where did you leave your motor?"

"In the wood road, just back of the house."

"Did your husband know you were there?"

"No."

"Did your butler, True, know it?"

"I don't think so."

"Who did know you were in Lost?"

"My son, Anthony Drake. I wrote him to meet me at the turn of the road, just before it comes out into the grounds about Drake House."

"He did so?"

"Yes, he did."

"Did anyone else know you were coming?"

It was a shot in the dark, but Dickerson was keen now. She should not fob him off. It was a risk, but he must take it.

"One other."

Quickly, before she could try to escape or dodge, quickly, before Manning could trump up an objection: "Mrs. Drake, give me the name of that other?"

"I can't. I don't want to. It has nothing to do——"

Tony Drake twisted in his chair, but his step-father, who sat beside him, put his hand on his arm. "Quiet," he whispered.

Andrew Dickerson leaned forward, no longer the kindly lawyer, but an inquisitor, a man who would have the truth, though the heavens fell: "It is absolutely necessary and vital that you give me the name of some one who will corroborate your story. Who, beside one of the prisoners here, Tony Drake, knew of your presence in Lost Harbor?"

Slowly, Mrs. Drake looked before her toward the place where the witnesses were gathered together, and as slowly her head drooped. She said, so faintly that Andrew Dickerson had to lean forward to hear it, and to repeat it after her: "Len Willoughby."

CHAPTER XXIII

"LEN WILLOUGHBY!" Andrew Dickerson had repeated it, but evidently so had many other people in the courtroom, for it was like an echo. Willoughby, himself, seated among the witnesses, started, then stared straight before him, his arms folded.

"Please tell us, as shortly as you can, Mrs. Drake, why you came down to Lost Harbor secretly, without notifying any of your household, except your son."

"I wanted to get something that belonged to me."

"What was it that brought you down to Lost Harbor? What did you come for?"

It was out and asked. Everybody held their breath to hear what she would say.

"I wanted to get the seven silver buttons, the brooch and the belt buckle from my old dress, which had been given to Jenny Weaver, by True, the butler, without my permission."

Involuntarily True rose, and as quickly sat down again.

"The seven silver buttons, the belt buckle, and the brooch," Andrew Dickerson repeated. "Why? Were they of such value?"

"They were solid silver, but it was not their value. It was something one of them contained."

Manning, still at sea as to what all this meant, sprang to his feet to object to this as irrelevant, immaterial and inconsequent, but his objection was recognized for what it was, a sparring for time, and was overruled.

"Which one of them?"

"The one which is made like a brooch."

In the midst of another fruitless objection, the exhibits (A^1, A^2 and A^3) the brooch, the buttons, and the later-found silver buckle, were brought to him. He and Manning bent over the brooch. It was large, oblong, the front ornamented in a cut-out pattern of filagree work. It was backed with silver and they could not see anything, save the broad silver pin and loop that had fastened it to the fabric of the dress.

"Why did you want this particular brooch?"

"Because—" she looked beseechingly at her husband and at her son. While Tony looked straight before him, his step-father deliberately leaned toward his wife, obscuring her view of her son, and smiled at her, as though to say: "Yes, yes, get on with it."

"Because," Mrs. Drake began slowly, "if you will look at that brooch carefully, you will note that it is oblong, and deeper than the buttons, which are bell-shaped and much shallower and smaller. If you feel along the edge of the brooch, carefully, you will find a catch or spring, for the brooch is hollow."

The two men looked at it, fumbled with it and finally shook their heads. It was handed to Mrs. Drake and, with trembling fingers, she pulled at the filagree cover, with its minute interstices, and it swung open. "It's gone!" She touched, with her finger, some tiny plastered bits of a substance that looked like dried pulp, that clung to the inside of the brooch. "The rain and snow must have soaked through the spaces in the silver filagree and reduced it to this!"

The brooch was passed down to the two attorneys who verified that it was empty, save for a little crumpled dab of some substance that might be paper pulp, plastered against the back.

"What did you expect to find?"

Again Mrs. Drake looked toward her husband, and again he smiled at her.

"A note. A note on the thinnest paper, folded up and hidden in this brooch, when I left it in Lost Harbor. It was because I received word that this had been seen, been read, by someone to whom it had not been written, that I came to Lost Harbor, after writing my son that he must see Jenny Weaver and buy back from her the silver buttons, the belt buckle and the brooch. I did not want my husband to know of my coming, so I did not dare stay there one moment longer than I could help. I daren't risk coming by train, lest some one would recognize me, and speak of it to him. I explained this to Tony, and he wrote me that he would meet me after nine o'clock, the time I had set for my arrival, at the point in the woods just before you come to the cleared grounds about the house. I could come to this point from the main, or Harbor Road, without much danger of being seen by any of the townsmen. The car I used was not one of the Lost Harbor machines."

"Where was your husband?"

"My husband had gone on a two days' fishing trip with George Anterey, a friend of his, and I knew he would not be back in Newport until late the second night."

"Continue, please. You came to Lost Harbor in this car? Without seeing any one you knew?"

"Yes. I crossed the river bridge about a mile from this courthouse. I left the main road, and went along a side road from which I came down Sandy Road, without seeing anybody. Then I took the wood road, and Tony met me. It was after nine then, and he told me that he had not been able to get the buttons or the brooch from Jenny. Jenny would give them back, but she wanted to give them to me, herself. He told me that it was hard for her to get here without Blaine Weaver knowing it, but she had promised to come to

meet me as soon as she could. She was determined, Tony said, to see me. I was furious at Tony for not managing the affair better, and I cried and scolded him and sent him back to see if he could meet her."

Andrew glanced quickly at her, and then away. It was Mrs. Drake, then, whom Mrs. Quinn had heard. From the whisper that could be heard faintly all over the courtroom, others had arrived at the same conclusion.

"I climbed in the motor car to wait for him—and her," Mrs. Drake continued.

"Why didn't you go to your own house?"

"Because I didn't want my husband ever to know anything about this visit, and I knew True, the butler, was capable of finding out that I was there, and why I was there."

"What did you do while Tony Drake was away attempting to get Jenny to come to you?"

"I drank some tea. I had tea and sandwiches in the thermos case we carried in that car. I sat there quietly awhile eating, waiting for Tony to appear. I heard voices along the road. I left the car. It was well hidden, and to one side of the road. I went along the road, softly, it was carpeted with pine needles, and stepped behind one of the trees, when I saw two men fighting. One of them was my son, and the other was Blaine Weaver."

She paused for breath, and Dickerson asked encouragingly: "What did you do then, Mrs. Drake?"

"I stepped out from behind the tree, meaning to run along the path and see if Jenny Weaver was there, and then I saw True coming along the road and I ducked quickly back behind the tree, just as I saw Jenny come toward the fighting men."

"Then you were the vision, or shadow, which Alonzo True said he saw?" Dickerson asked.

"Yes."

There was an almost universal sigh of relief. The thing had been substantial, human, not something outside the beaten path.

"What happened after that?"

"They fought, and Lon True and Jenny watched the fight. I watched them from behind the tree. I saw that Jenny had on my dress—with the buttons, the buckle and the brooch. Suddenly I saw Jenny Weaver come running toward them and try to interfere. Her husband turned from Tony and struck her. She gave a scream and fell, and my son ran at Blaine Weaver and pulled him around, but Blaine struck Tony so that he fell; then Weaver lifted Jenny up, threw her across his shoulder and started to go away with her."

"In what direction?"

"Toward Sandy Road, where a car was standing."

"What did you do?"

"I was afraid of being seen, I stayed behind the tree and saw Blaine Weaver fling Jenny into the car and True lift Tony up and start to carry him."

"What happened then?"

"I didn't know what to do. I stole back to the car and waited there until, presently, I saw my son coming toward me, alone."

"Did you remain in the car?"

"No, I ran toward him, and he came to me and told me it couldn't be done to-night, and I'd best go back and leave him to do what he could later——"

"What did you do?"

"I was very angry at poor Tony for mismanaging the thing, as I thought, and I asked him to drive me to the station. So he pulled his hat down over his black eye, and started with me for the station—in this town. When we got there, although I got out and went toward the train, I was sure I saw some one watching who

knew me, and might speak of seeing me here. I came down the steps of the coach again, on the side from the station, and went over the tracks, behind the baggage cars, and into the motor, and Tony drove me toward Portland Pike and left me there, and I drove back to Portland."

"Alone?"

Mrs. Drake hesitated. "Yes. Tony wanted to come with me, but I wouldn't let him. I made him get out at the corner of Harbor Road and the Pike. It was only a little way from there to Sandy Road and home."

"Why did you put him off there, Mrs. Drake? Why didn't you take him with you—to Portland? It was a long, dark road to Portland."

"Because I knew we had been followed from the station."

"Did Tony know this?"

"Yes. He begged me to let him drive me to Portland. But I wouldn't let him." She added something, in her excitement, that she had not told Dickerson before. "I saw a chance to leave everything in safer, more experienced hands than Tony's, if this man once caught up to me—alone."

In the instant she had said it, she knew what she had done. Not from Andrew Dickerson, for he maintained a quiet, unsurprised manner.

"How did you know anyone was following you?"

"Because—I—I mean, I told you I had seen this man at the station."

"He was the person you saw watching the train?"

Mrs. Drake hesitated again. "Yes. He had seen me, but I knew better than to talk to him on the platform, anyone might see us together. He followed me."

"In his own car?"

"No, in True's."

"Was Alonzo True there too?"

"Yes."

Again Dickerson, maintaining his unastonished manner, studied this woman. She was making ducks and drakes of his case, as well as of Manning's. He must ask her, however, no matter what happened. "You knew this and did not tell your son?"

"Not until we were well out on the road, because Tony had been in one fight that night. I did not want a brawl at the station."

"Was he willing to let you see this man?"

"No, but I made him consent by saying that, if he interfered, he would ruin my chances of getting what I wanted and would let his step-father know—all I wanted to keep from him."

"Who was the man who had followed you from the station in True's car?"

"Len Willoughby."

"What happened when he came up to you at the corner?"

"Why he asked Tony to go back to the house with Alonzo and asked Alonzo to meet the early morning train, about two, and he would arrange to get back into his own house without anyone knowing he had been in Portland."

"Did your son consent to that?"

"Not without protest, but he finally saw there was nothing else to be done."

"Why was there nothing else to be done?"

"Because it was Len Willoughby's note that was causing all the trouble. He had given me the silver brooch and buttons."

The courtroom was so still that Andrew Dickerson's voice sounded unnecessarily loud, even to himself. Every eye was riveted on Lowell Drake. He bore it without a flicker of his eyelashes.

Andrew Dickerson was nearly as surprised as the

rest of the courtroom. They could not know, as he did, that this particular information, which the woman had never given him, had been unwillingly given, and only by the accident of her own slip. He was sure Lowell Drake had not been told.

"This note was written by you, Mrs. Drake?"

"No. It was written by Len Willoughby, and I was afraid that, if Mr. Drake was shown this note, under certain circumstances, he would believe that the facts alluded to in it still existed."

"Did they not?"

"No, they did not."

"What facts were those?"

"That Mr. Willoughby was not willing to end our—our—friendship—and insisted that I meet him again—"

"Was that what the note in the locket demanded?"

"Yes."

"And why did you not destroy it, at once?"

Manning interrupted, releasing everybody from a tenseness that was almost painful, declaring that, since the note was not in evidence and they had only Mrs. Drake's word for its existence, all reference to it should be excluded from the testimony.

After a long wrangle, the examination was allowed to proceed.

"Did you not realize that it was a dangerous thing to keep such a communication?"

"Yes, but, you see, the dress came to me—was delivered from the dressmaker's, in Mr. Drake's presence and, though I knew about the brooch, I dared not open it."

"How did it get in the brooch? At the dressmaker's?"

"Yes."

"Was that where you met Mr. Willoughby?"

"Sometimes."

"How long had this—friendship—between you and Mr. Willoughby lasted?"

Instantly, Manning interrupted, indicating suavely that this was a murder trial, not a divorce court, and it was immaterial where, when, or how often Mrs. Drake had met Willoughby.

Dickerson could hear Tony's inarticulate growl, but he kept his back turned to his client, and hastily continued his examination: "Did you ever wear the dress?"

"No. Mr. Drake disliked it, but the brooch seemed the best place for the note until I could safely destroy it. So I kept the dress and, by and by, I left Lost Harbor and forgot it."

"Under what circumstances were you reminded of it?"

"In the spring of 1927 my rooms, at Drake House, were being redecorated, during my absence, and True had all my clothes moved to the attic, by Jenny. She saw the dress, and wanted it. Because it had been left there a long time, True thought I wouldn't want or remember it and he gave it to her. Jenny must have discovered the spring in the brooch, and opened it. True and Weaver evidently did not know it had been found in the brooch but they must have surprised her with the letter, for they tried to blackmail Mr. Willoughby. He sent me word of the danger, and I came down." Mrs. Drake's voice was low. Her head dropped. She had always made excuses for and to herself, but even she could read from the faces in the courtroom what they thought of her. She dared not look at Lowell or Tony.

"When did you first—become interested—in Len Willoughby?"

Everyone in the courtroom involuntarily strained forward. Even the press stopped writing. Tony shaded his eyes with his hand, but Lowell Drake looked toward his wife, apparently unmoved.

"I was first interested in his voice." She said it as though offering her excuse. "I loaned him the money to go to New York and study."

The murmur of surprise in the courtroom rose to such proportions that the judge rapped for order.

The press was not murmuring, it was making notes, reading between the questions and answers, with its tongue in its cheek, the glorious scandal it might hint to its readers. This was the mysterious patron who had given Len the golden ladder on which he had made his rise to fame.

Order restored, the witness went on, her voice low, but clear: "I paid for his coaching there, and made it possible for him to get his chance for a trial." The witness paused, and looked directly at her husband, as though he were the only man in the room. "It was not as strange as it seemed. Len Willoughby is about my own age. He taught me to swim, and to manage a boat, when my father first came to Maine. When I was very young and Drake House had not yet been built, we, my father, mother and I, used to come here, every summer. Len Willoughby used to cut the grass and tend the garden of the first cottage we had here. Years after, when my father died, Blaine Weaver threatened to create a scandal and Len came to me and told me, so that I could guard against it and save my mother a terrible shock, and so that I could take measures to—to get legal advice. She could not bear anything like that—then, in her weak state, and with Len Willoughby's aid I managed to put a stop to it. I should say here, that it was not the Codeys, themselves, who proposed to make a scandal."

"Why should Blaine Weaver be interested in this scandal?"

"Because the scandal concerned his wife." Mrs. Drake paused and drew a deep breath. "It cannot hurt

to tell it now. My mother is dead, and I no longer care. The scandal—the story—was that Jenny Weaver was my half-sister. That she was my father's illegitimate daughter. The fact that we were somewhat alike, though I was the elder and fairer, lent colour to it and she wore my clothes well, because we were so nearly the same build——"

Suddenly Mrs. Drake said, impulsively: "Jenny wasn't the one who threatened the scandal. She liked me. She always had. When I went to her she told me she wasn't any prouder of the story than I was, that she would let them kill her rather than say anything that would hurt my mother, or allow them to use her to get money from us. I tried to give her money, but she would not take it. She said that if I would let her tell my son—tell Tony that she was his aunt, it was all she would ask, and that that way it would not hurt Tony as much as if he heard about it through village gossip."

"She would never take a regular pension from me, such as I proposed. She would take my clothes, and she took a little money every now and then from Tony, though I didn't know that until lately."

There was a little gasp from the Lost Harbor people. Nobody had thought poor, pretty, flashy Jenny was quite so generous or so foolish. Mrs. Drake, with the Drake millions behind her, and yet Jenny would take nothing!

Mrs. Drake seemed to see how it affected the others, for she said, quickly: "I did try to make her take a regular weekly sum, but she would not. She begged me not to let Blaine and the others know that she had refused it, or she would be in danger. Let them think, rather, that I had not offered her anything. So I agreed, with the understanding that if anything happened, if she were really poor or needed money, she

was to let me know, through Tony, and I would help her."

Even to Mrs. Drake's selfish ears, calloused to anything but her own sufferings, it sounded cruelly hard and unsympathetic that she should have left this woman, her half-sister, to the careless kindness of a boy, and a boy who was kept on very short rations as to pocket money.

This amazing revelation had made even the district attorney forget that he must object if only to gain time to replan his cross-examination. With an effort, he brought it back to commonplace by objecting to it as hearsay and irrelevant.

"Who were the others you alluded to?" Dickerson asked, as he resumed the examination. "Jenny's family?"

"No. Blaine Weaver, Porter Hallay and Lon True."

There was a momentary turning of faces toward the place where Lon True sat among the witnesses.

"Are you not mistaken as to the last two, Mrs. Drake?"

"No, I paid Lon True, who came to me with the story, a bonus over and above his salary every year for as long as he kept the secret, the others quiet, and the scandal from spreading in the town and reaching my husband's ears. I paid Blaine Weaver, through True, a small weekly sum, so long as he kept quiet about it. Porter Hallay, every now and then, received a share of extra 'expense' money I paid to True. Porter was their errand boy—their go-between."

"And your son?"

"My son knew nothing about these payments. He knew that Jenny was his left-handed aunt, and I believe he was fond of her, fond enough, anyway, to share what money he had. But he didn't know that Blaine was being paid so that he would leave Jenny alone.

That was why I did it," she said, quickly, raising her voice and looking toward her son, "so that Weaver would be kinder to Jenny, since she was his source of income!" It was Mrs. Drake's cry to her listeners to understand her. It was her belated thought to make atonement for the fact that she had created one of the reasons for Jenny's murder.

Instinctively, Manning was on his feet flaying the witness in no measured terms as introducing matter not relevant, nor pertinent, to her direct examination, but Milly had said it.

Her husband and son watched her squirm her way out of the pit into which she had landed them all. As Lowell recognized, and Tony refused to recognize, she was only brought to explain herself because of the consequences of what she had done. It was only because she realized that she had blundered, as far as the stupid outside world went, blundered by being found out, that she stood afraid of punishment, and tried to defend herself. Part of her punishment would be that she was no longer admired for her beauty or her amiability, that everybody would know, not only the Willoughby scandal but—her mean thrift, her carefulness of the money that did not really belong to her, but to Tony.

If Tony had never been arrested for murder, and Juliet Jackson, with her quick wits and merciless penetration of the female mind and its tortuous way to its end had not unravelled the clue that led to Milly, never would Milly have spoken. She would have gone on playing her amiable, selfish game until she died, hood-winking, as Lowell bitterly reminded himself, not only her husband and son, but her whole little world. That Jane and Tony suffered cruelly was something that Milly neither permitted herself to dwell on nor really believed. To Milly Drake it was Milly Drake

who suffered, as she felt, unjustly. Why should she be pilloried in this manner before her own son and the community she had lived in for years? She had been so safe. No one had guessed about Len Willoughby, and now she ran the risk of losing her husband, for ever, simply because some one had killed Jenny Weaver, who was, after all, a woman of no importance, even though she had given her life to keep Milly's secret.

When the legal clamour had finally died down, Dickerson, fully aware of how much Milly had again involved her son, asked her: "Then, having left your son with Lon True, what did you do?"

"Went to Portland with Len Willoughby. Halfway there he left me at a railroad station, and he caught the train back to Lost Harbor."

"And your car?"

"I drove it back to Newport."

"And you accepted the stories of Jenny Weaver's leaving town with one of a vaudeville team?"

"Yes, when I heard it. Why not?"

"It is not your place to ask questions, Mrs. Drake."

"I meant merely what else was there for me to do? There was no further attempt made to get money from Mr. Willoughby."

"Mrs. Drake, did your son accept that story?"

She hesitated. "I don't know."

"Do you mean to tell me he never mentioned Jenny again?"

"No. He mentioned her to me, more than once, and he wrote me the day after Jenny's disappearance."

"What did he write you?"

"He told me that he could not get me the brooch, or the buttons because Jenny had disappeared and he asked me to give him money to use in searching for Jenny. He feared she might be unhappy or ill, or very poor, and he did not feel comfortable about it."

"What did you do?"

Mrs. Drake hesitated, wondering why everything that was done in this hateful trial brought out the one trait in her character which she felt she had always successfully hidden—her reluctance to part with money. "I refused," she said firmly, "to give him the money, and told him that if Jenny was ill, or in trouble, she had only to let us know, and it would be time enough to remedy it then."

"Did Jenny's going end the matter, as far as the note was concerned?"

"Yes, but several weeks after that, Tony again asked me for money to search for Jenny. He felt uncomfortable."

"How felt uncomfortable?"

"He insisted that there was something wrong about Jenny's disappearance. He declared Jenny would never have disappointed him, herself. He declared that Jenny must have met with some misfortune, to fail to keep her bargain and give him the brooch, and begged me to let him make some private inquiries, said it haunted him. He wanted to try and trace her."

"What did you do?"

"Told him it was ridiculous. He had nothing to go on but a superstitious feeling, and that we were much better off with both Jenny and the brooch gone." So justified was she in her selfishness, that she had forgotten how it would sound to other ears. Both her husband and her son looked away from her, as the courtroom looked its contempt, and Dickerson said in his driest tones to Manning:

"The witness is yours."

Manning rose and, as he rose, Mrs. Drake, who had been thinking surely the worst was over for her, looked and saw, not the very presentable young man whom she had met occasionally on her visits here and whom she

remembered as a little boy, but a keen, merciless inquisitor. He was not in the least the clever local lawyer who had been more or less flattered when the lovely Mrs. Drake had consulted him about some legal question concerning her estate here.

Now Mrs. Drake was of apparently no consequence to anyone in that courtroom, except for the information she was able to give. She was no longer the beautiful, wealthy woman who could command, who could brush aside with impunity, or with charm, those conventions which poorer, plainer, less powerful women, must respect.

The citadel of Mrs. Drake's whole life rocked for a moment as she thought: Is it because I look haggard and older? Is it because my beauty is gone? But she put the thought from her. Surely that could not be. Every woman at times shows fatigue or strain; that was all that was wrong with her. Normally she would have been able to retire from the world until rest and care had restored her tired body; but now body and mind were subject to a continual strain, and all under this glaring light of publicity. It would take many days of rest to repair the damage, but rest would come, and she would once more—charm.

She took out her vanity mirror as Manning suddenly removed his eyes from her face and, looking at his notes, stooped and spoke to his assistant. She took a fleeting look at herself, but that one glimpse was terrible. Why she looked awful! And Len Willoughby was looking at her, though she had avoided his eyes. Good God! What this case had made of her! It would take weeks to recover her poise—her looks. She was frightened; indignant. What right had the dead Jenny to bring this catastrophe on her. What right had Tony, whom she had always, heretofore, been able to keep in the background, to break her whole life into pieces.

It was bad enough that he should grow up. She looked with a cold eye at this strange young man who had suddenly ceased to be a boy, and become an obstacle in her path, whom she could not ignore nor push aside.

Manning's voice broke through her thoughts, tore down the last remaining tatters of the flag she flew before the world. "Mrs. Drake, did you continue to pay Blaine Weaver, Lon True and, incidentally, their associate, Porter Hallay, *after* Jenny's disappearance?"

Mrs. Drake stared at him, frightened. She could see her answer spread out in the papers. Incredibly mean and stupid, that's what Lowell would say. She stared at Manning, trying to think of a way to squirm out of this answer which would stamp her for ever as a coward, "I don't——"

"Answer, Mrs. Drake, yes, or no."

"I—I would like——"

"Did you, or did you not? It is a plain question."

"Yes, I did—but——"

"Never mind the 'buts'. In spite of what you had seen in your last visit at Lost Harbor, you continued to pay Blaine Weaver and Lon True? For what?"

It rang through the courtroom like a trumpet call.

It shook even Andrew Dickerson, gravely preparing his notes. He had shaded his face with his hand, in pretended thought, but really to rest his eyes, weary from gazing at a woman to whom appearance was everything, and who had, temporarily at any rate, lost her all.

Mrs. Drake gave a little frightened sigh.

Andrew Dickerson rose to his feet and began an objection. At least, he could give the poor creature a chance to pull herself together.

But the objection was sternly denied, the judge holding that the question was within the prosecuting attorney's rights.

"For what?"

"Because—I had promised—to pay them if they destroyed the letter, more than I paid them to keep quiet about—about that absurd story concerning my father—and Jenny."

"Are you paying them now?" He would have time enough to examine other witnesses as to her story, which rang so true. He would do nothing with this woman but discredit her in the eyes of the jury. "Are you paying these men now?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Drake, and suddenly looked toward her husband. Then she did the best thing she could have done, under the circumstances, she slipped unconscious from the chair.

CHAPTER XXIV

MRS. DRAKE had gone from the courtroom, with the understanding that she would return to the witness stand when, and if, the county attorney required her return.

True was recalled. A grim-faced, stubborn witness now, very different from the debonair butler who had first testified. He was forced to corroborate Mrs. Drake's testimony and, finally, to admit that he had driven Tony Drake back to the house, and seen him climb the stairs to his room; that he had deliberately held back this information, which he asserted he thought would "hurt" Tony's case, hoping his reticence would be well rewarded, by Mrs. Drake.

The man's mean and sordid nature was revealed in a manner that made even his roughest fellow-townsman turn from him with loathing.

Then Andrew Dickerson put Clarges, the handwriting expert again on the stand with the specimen of Len Willoughby's handwriting Juliet had secured, and the note she had bought from the Codeys, signed with the initial " L."

Carefully, and despite a cascade of objections from Manning, Clarges identified the note as having been written by Len Willoughby, by comparing it with his handwriting, not only in the specimen Juliet had brought, but with undisputed documents.

The cross-examination failed to shake this.

Amid an expectant silence, Len Willoughby was called. His appearance was evidently the signal for "full speed ahead," by the press. Every news repre-

sentative was in his or her place, and most of them had begun to scribble rapidly an opening paragraph about the handsome singer.

Juliet was an exception. For the first time since the trial began, Juliet saw Tony look afraid. In an instant the look had disappeared, for his step-father came back without Mrs. Drake. Juliet could tell, from his lips, that Lowell Drake was saying: "I've sent your mother home."

Tony nodded, and sank back in his chair, but Juliet found herself unable to write the first sentence, which should have been a vivid description of Len's manly beauty, calculated to interest readers whether they "liked murders" or not.

Willoughby, she noted, was older than she had first thought; but still magnificent. She began to scribble, with her eyes fixed on him, as he took the oath, and stated that he had a summer home at Lost Harbor, and his occupation. The subdued murmur, as at a matinée audience, died away as the judge rapped for order and Dickerson began to question him.

The first question asked him was to whom the note signed "L", identified as his, had been written.

Willoughby looked at the note and then across the courtroom and said: "To Mrs. Drake."

"Not to Jenny Weaver?"

"And given to Jenny Weaver to deliver."

In an instant Dickerson saw the solution to much that had puzzled him. Just as the dressmaker in New York had been used, so had Jenny Weaver been their go-between in Lost Harbor.

"She knew," Len Willoughby added quietly, "Jenny knew that I was—in love with Mrs. Drake. Hopelessly in love."

He had lied like a gentleman, but no one in the court-room, or in Lost would ever believe him.

"Then *that* note was never delivered?"

"That note was never delivered. It was, however, seen——"

"By whom?"

"The defendants."

"Both of them?"

"Blaine Weaver, surely, because he phoned Lon True about it."

"Do you know how it came back into Jenny's pocket?"

"Jenny meant to deliver it, when she gave Mrs. Drake the note hidden in the brooch, but she must have forgotten it and left it in the apron pocket. I know Mrs. Drake never saw it."

"Please tell us, in your own way, Mr. Willoughby, just where you were, and what you saw on the 7th of July, 1927."

"I went from my house to the carnival with several of my guests. At the carnival we became separated, so I took a turn around the carnival grounds by myself, in the moonlight, before I started home. When I went outside I saw Jenny Weaver at the gate, getting into the wagon with her husband, and they were quarrelling, so I couldn't speak to her."

"What did you do then, Mr. Willoughby?"

Len Willoughby hesitated. It was evident, but for Mrs. Drake's confession, this information would never have been given by him. Then he said: "I met Lon True and asked for Tony, then I called Mr. Tony Drake, at Miss Stover's house, and ascertained that he expected his mother later that evening, and that she would go home, by train.

"Later that night, I left my guests dancing, and walked to the town. I meant to take a taxi to the station. I didn't like to risk using my own car. I—it was too well known. I met Lon True, near Mullin's

drug store, and I could not shake him off, so I finally allowed him to give me a lift to the station here. I saw and recognized Mrs. Drake but, since Lon was waiting about, watching me, I did not join her. She got out of the train and went by the back way to the car again, without his seeing her. With True there we could not go by train, together. She kept out of sight in the back of the car.

"When we were well on our way toward Lost again, Tony Drake stopped his mother's car, left it and walked back and signalled us to stop too. I changed places with him."

"Did Anthony Drake consent to this, Willoughby?"

"I don't know. I never asked him, nor knew what his mother had told him. She was to make him understand that she was in trouble, and that I was the only one who could help her."

"What did True say to this change?"

"Nothing. He was too far away to identify the woman in the car and I am sure he thought Jenny was with Tony and that he would be able to hold us both up for hush money.

"When I came back on the early morning train, after leaving Mrs. Drake, True met me at the station, as agreed. I wouldn't let him drive me home. I had him put me down near Sandy Road, where it meets Harbor Road. I could get in unheard, if I did not have a car. I paid him enough to keep his mouth shut for a time, and started to walk home. I went down Sandy Road, about two o'clock, or a little after."

"Was there anyone else on the road?"

"Not when I first turned down it, but when I got to the wood road I saw someone moving off among the trees, by the wood road. I mean, of course, the road that runs through the Drake place. This man had a bag in his hand, a bag, not a suitcase, and I thought it

must have been full of something heavy, the way he held it."

"Where did he go? I mean, in what direction was he moving?"

"Toward the water, and the Drake place."

"Did you see him plainly?"

"Yes, when I came up to the junction, I could see him fairly well. I saw then that the bag might have been just a cloth bag, or an old grip, or even something tied up, hastily, and that he wasn't exactly bent with the weight of it, but that he was looking back at a certain spot in the woods."

A shiver went through his audience. Everybody was trying not to think of what probably had been in that bag.

"Do you think he saw you?"

"No, he didn't seem to be looking at me, or in my direction. He seemed to be looking more at a certain spot among the trees."

"Near the edge of the road, that is, to one side of the road?"

"Very near the side of the road."

"As a matter of fact, since this tragedy has come to light, have you been along that road and located the direction in which he was looking?"

"Yes, he was looking back at a spot that corresponds with the tree under which Jenny Weaver's skeleton was found."

"Was he alone?"

"I thought he was, at first, but presently someone detached himself from the trees in the direction in which he was looking. In my opinion, this second man rose from the ground there, but it may have been that he was merely waiting, crouched in the shadow."

"Did you know who this last man mentioned was?"

"Yes, I recognized him as Blaine Weaver."

"How far away from him were you at the time?"

"About a hundred feet. Maybe a little more."

"Yet you knew him?"

"Yes, it was a clear night, or rather morning, and you could see fairly well."

"Did you recognize the first man?"

"When Weaver joined the other man, I saw that he was Tony Drake."

There was a long sigh, as of fear, throughout the whole courtroom. Had Len Willoughby come so late into this case only to wreck it—and Tony.

Juliet looked apprehensively at Dickerson, but he seemed imperious to fear. He waited courteously for Manning's objection, and when this had been made and dismissed, said, quietly:

"Continue as briefly as possible, that we may avoid interruptions."

"He took the bag from Tony, without either of them saying a word or, if they did, they whispered it, and I could not hear them, and then they went slowly off toward the water near the Drake place."

"You are positive that this man was Tony Drake?"

"I did not see his face clearly, but his figure and his clothes were those of Tony Drake."

"Are you positive that the man who joined him was Blaine Weaver?"

"I am positive. I saw *his* face."

"What happened then?"

"They walked together out of sight and then I went on down Sandy Road."

"You have never spoken of this before?"

"No, I saw no reason to speak of it. I merely thought that Blaine Weaver was very poor company for a young man like Tony Drake."

"You went home?"

"I went home and went to bed and thought no more of it."

"Not even when you heard of Jenny Weaver's disappearance?"

"Not even then, seriously."

"When did you first think of it seriously?"

"When Jenny Weaver's bones were discovered."

"You knew Blaine Weaver well, by sight?"

"Yes, I worked along side of Weaver for a time when I was a fisherman."

"And since then?"

"Since then I have seen him about the town."

"You know Tony Drake?"

"Yes, he used to run about the Harbor as a kid. He is much younger than I."

"You realize, Mr. Willoughby, how serious your statement is—for Tony Drake?"

"I do. It was because of that seriousness, that I did not come forward before."

Juliet realized that Willoughby was both determined and glad to make this excuse publicly. There had been an air of decided coolness toward Willoughby since Mrs. Drake's statement.

"There is no possibility that you might have mistaken some other man for Tony?"

"I hardly think it possible."

"You didn't see his face?"

"Not clearly. That is, not as clearly as I saw Blaine Weaver's face; but I am quite sure the man I thought was Tony Drake was Tony Drake."

There was a slight movement, a murmur audible in the audience. It was as though they all asked the question: "Why is this man so anxious to implicate Tony Drake?"

"Have you been in the courtroom through the giving of the testimony in this case, Mr. Willoughby?"

"No, sir. I came to this trial for the first time, to-day."

"If I told you that on July 7th, 1927, another man was wearing an old suit of clothes belonging to Tony Drake, would you still swear that the man you had seen was Tony Drake?"

For the first time, Len Willoughby's beautiful brows were brought together.

Manning's quick objection that this was leading, gave him time to answer, but even so, Dickerson warned him. "Be careful, and take your time before answering, Mr. Willoughby. With the Court's permission, I am about to ask you to leave the room for a moment, in order that I may stage a certain test."

"I am quite sure that it was Tony Drake."

Immediately the judge called both lawyers to the side bar to argue the question of the test. While they were so arguing, Willoughby was conducted to the jury room.

After much argument, and a statement of just what the test staged was to be, by Dickerson, Porter Hallay was brought from the jail, dressed in an old suit belonging to Tony, of the same colour as the one he wore; also one of Tony's hats.

Tony Drake was directed to put on a hat of the same style, and went reluctantly with Porter to the rear of the courtroom, where there were fewer windows, and the light could be made dim and shadowy. They were carefully placed, in the same attitude, and each was told to pull his hat down over his face, and turn his back to the Court.

Willoughby was brought in from the jury room, thus entering the courtroom, facing the rear, was halted at about the same distance as he had said he had seen Tony Drake that night, and told to resume his testimony.

Then Dickerson spoke and, despite all that hung on the test, his voice was quite devoid of any apparent anxiety: "Mr. Willoughby, look at the right hand corner, in the rear of the courtroom. There are two men standing there; which of them is Tony Drake?"

Willoughby faced toward the rear, but said nothing.

"Answer me at once," Dickerson demanded. "Don't stand wondering. It's snap judgment I want, man. Which one of these men is Tony Drake?"

Again Willoughby waited a second, then said: "I can't tell," and thought to save himself by adding: "at this distance."

Manning, who had endeavoured to object before, now made a long objection, which the judge refused to allow.

"The distance," said Dickerson, quietly, "is less than the distance from the place where, according to your testimony, you were standing to the place in the wood road where you say you saw Tony Drake. Now, having had time, thanks to my esteemed opponent's objections, to decide which of those two men is Tony Drake, tell me. Right or left?"

"I think the left-hand man."

"You, on the left, turn," said Dickerson.

The left-hand man was Porter Hallay and his face was lowering and sulky.

Mr. Dickerson allowed that fact to seep in to his jury and audience, as well as the witness.

"Turn, Tony."

The right-hand man turned, and Tony faced Willoughby, the man he loathed as much as he hated Blaine Weaver.

The sound of applause broke the stillness of the courtroom; to be instantly rebuked by the judge, who threatened to clear the Court, unless order was maintained.

Then Andrew Dickerson said, with a smile that showed to them all his opinion of Willoughby's testimony: "No further direct-examination."

Instantly Manning was on his feet, with another objection to the test that had been made. Vehemently he argued for its exclusion from the records. His objection was overruled, the Court stating that the test made had been, in fact, perfectly fair and equable.

Visibly annoyed, Manning then began his cross-examination: "On the night of July 7th, 1927, was there, or was there not, a moon?"

"Not at the time."

"You have testified that there was a moon when you left the carnival grounds," roared Manning, greatly displeased with this witness, who had destroyed so much of his carefully built theory of the crime. "Now, at the time you saw this man you thought you recognized as Tony Drake was there, or was there not, a moon?"

"Not at the time I saw the man. After midnight, on July 7th, 1927, there was no moon."

"Objected to," said Andrew Dickerson quietly. "The Court is respectfully asked to consider if it matters whether there was a moon or not, since the witness has shown in his testimony that it was two in the morning when he saw these men, and, in a light brighter than moonlight, he was quite unable to distinguish between Tony Drake and Porter Hallay. If counsel is simply going to take us around Robin Hood's barn, and back, I respectfully submit that we have not time for such an excursion."

Manning's face was dark as, the Court having stated that, unless counsel had some particular point to bring out, there was no necessity for any further examination of the witness as to moonlight. It had

already been clearly established in the case that there was a moon early that night.

Manning turned to the witness and asked in a curt voice: "Were you identifying Mr. Tony Drake by his clothes, his height, or by his face?"

Willoughby who, despite his magnificent stage presence, had begun to feel that he had not distinguished himself on the witness stand, kept his temper with difficulty, for the darling of the public was not used to this tone of voice. He answered, shortly.

"I testified to the truth. The man I saw that night I thought, by his clothes, by his attitude, and by the little I could see of his face, was Tony Drake."

"Are you still sure that it was Tony Drake, or has the experiment made by counsel for the defence shaken your belief in the fact that you saw Tony Drake that night?"

"I did honestly believe then that the man I saw was Tony Drake."

It was said with emphasis, but further examination proved that Willoughby had never spoken to Tony Drake about this meeting, and it was plain to every one, but himself, that Willoughby had seen Porter Hallay and Blaine Weaver disposing of the head.

Manning dismissed him, and the man who had walked unconcernedly to the stand, through a gaping, admiring crowd of his fellow-townsmen, took his way back through the same crowd, conscious that they were no longer admiring. In spite of the fact that he was the great Len Willoughby, who did not mind admitting that he had been a fisherman once and knew them all, this audience was cold and critical. His affair with Mrs. Drake was damaging enough, but his reluctance to come forward and tell what he knew, and his eagerness to condemn Tony Drake, would not soon be forgiven.

Len had his own reasons for disliking Tony, but he thought he had kept them to himself. That this was not the case he could read in every face, as he went down the long room and took his former place among the witnesses.

He settled himself in his chair and, as he did so, looked toward Jane Stover. She gave him a long, appraising look that made him feel as though his answering flush enveloped him from head to foot; then she slowly turned away. Willoughby's face stung. He had meant to make Jane Stover look at him. Well, he had succeeded, but it was not the look he had thought to earn.

Then a quiet-voiced, grey-bearded farmer, the man Juliet had ferreted out, testified that in the early morning, the 8th of July, 1927, at four o'clock, on his way to the barn to milk his cows, he had seen Blaine Weaver and Porter Hallay, coming down Sandy Road on their way home—from what?

Amid the hush that was over the Court as this respected and trustworthy man left the witness stand, unshaken, in spite of a searching cross-examination, Lowell Drake moved toward his step-son and, for the first time since the trial began, Tony put his hand into his step-father's, as Andrew Dickerson said:

"The defence rests."

Juliet stole out of the courtroom. Her work was finished. Whether the jury acquitted Tony or not she could do no more; nor could she bear to wait for the closing speeches, or the judge's charge.

Andrew's summing up she knew would be short, but powerful, and Manning's would be equally strong. It was on the lap of the gods now.

She arranged with one of her associates to cover the speeches and to send a messenger for her at the bridge,

when the verdict was given. She could no longer bear to look on Jane Stover's face.

She wandered along the bank near the bridge, then sat down, her back against a little feathery larch tree. She pulled at one of its branches, as she looked out and across this incredibly blue and sparkling water, green to its very edge and above it the clear, clean blue of the sky with great banks of white clouds that heightened its colour.

She had gone over Dickerson's charge to the jury with him, last night, and she knew that he would show clearly that Tony Drake, an innocent man, had been dragged into a tragedy that had had its beginning in the cupidity of Blaine Weaver and the cowardice of Mrs. Drake. He would not spare her when he drew together the threads that had woven the tragedy. He would show that poor Jenny must have been discovered reading the fatal note, and had refused to tell where she found it. Blaine and Lon True, when they advised Mrs. Drake that they had seen it, must have supposed Jenny found it in the pocket of the gown with the silver buttons. Jenny, herself, determined to give it to Mrs. Drake, must have placed it again in the brooch.

When Blaine felled Jenny that night he had not thought her fatally hurt until they arrived at his father's house. Without telling his parents, he and Porter had taken her back and hidden her under the pines but when they tried to find the note, to make their own price for its delivery, they could not. They found that she was too tall to be completely hidden by the pine boughs. Three times, in their endeavour to hide her more securely, they had been interrupted, by Tony, who followed them from the drug store; by Mrs. Dark; and lastly, Len Willoughby had frightened them. It was Dickerson's belief that, but for these inter-

ruptions they would have completely dismembered the body and taken it far out to sea.

Dickerson would leave Blaine Weaver to his fate and bend all his effort to the clearing of Tony Drake, showing that the boy had suffered not only because he would not expose his mother's folly, but because of his generous, chivalrous liking for a woman to whom he felt that his own family had been unjust. Well, Jenny Weaver's skeleton fingers would soon cease to reach out and clutch frantically, begging some one to help her avenge her death. Those skeleton hands were full now, and were pulling the guilty away from familiar haunts, away from this blue water and sky.

Juliet began to compose the message she would send her paper. She must sound a new note. This was not to be a courtroom report, but the story of a terrible mistake.

The mighty cheer that burst from the courtroom reached her faintly down here at the bridge. Oh well, that might mean——

The messenger came running toward her. "Tony's free!" he panted. "But Blaine's guilty, and they've arrested Porter Hallay as an accessory!"

"Thank God!"

Juliet gave him the dollar she had promised, and added a few lines to her manuscript. "Tell Al to get this off for me."

She did not look up when he left, but sat gazing out over the water, the tears running down her cheeks, not for joy at Tony's release, but for her own lost ecstacy. Now that the excitement of the trial was over she was envying Jane Stover, who had the great joy of having stood by the man she loved against all her world. Once Juliet had done that and, although she had lost him, she knew that Jane drank of a cup that was never tasted twice in a woman's life.

She started to rise, and a strong arm lifted her to her feet. Bill Davis had followed the messenger. Juliet looked up at his kind eyes, and unable to restrain herself, gave a little stifled sob.

"Judy! Don't! My dear, I didn't mean anything I said yesterday! Not a word! I'm tremendously proud of you and no end grateful."

He looked at her anxiously, as she wiped her eyes.

"Julian's waiting in the car with Marian, and Andy wants to tell you that they owe everything to you. But—if you'd rather, we'll give them all the slip, darling. Shall we? I'll tell Andy it's your last case and——"

"No, Bill." She hated to hurt him, but how could she explain why, and for what, she was crying. "We'll meet them, and all go home together, because it isn't my last case, Bill, old dear. I can't give it up, yet."

They made their way toward the courthouse and the motor, in silence. Juliet dared not look at Bill. She liked him far too well, almost enough; but she couldn't lie to him. Bill deserved everything, not a grudging half.

Another tremendous burst of cheering made her look up hastily. The courtroom was still emptying itself and the people cheered as they poured through the doors.

She saw Tony come out, Jane's hand in his, a free man. That was her work. It was worth doing. She felt the thrill that was all the compensation she would ever ask.

320

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